The Degrees of Masonry

Their Origin and History

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PART 1

EVERY Mason has learned a traditional account of the various grades of Craft Masonry, and this term may be stretched to include more than the three degrees of the "Blue" or "Symbolic" Lodge, in especial the degrees of the Chapter and the Council. Aside from the fact that to an educated and intelligent man these legends bear on their face the stamp of the purely mythical, every Masonic student has inevitably become aware in the course of his reading that there have been definite theories advanced as to their origin, the more drastic of which practically denudes them, and by implication the Masonic ritual also, of any real antiquity at all.

It is perhaps rather curious that, though there have been a good many articles in THE BUILDER upon the general subject of the degrees, and some dealing with the origins of the Third, or Master Mason's Degree, yet there has been practically nothing about their origin as a system, although a good deal in regard to this has by many contributors been taken for granted. It had to be taken for granted, because to enter upon the subject as a whole would have led them too far afield. Yet the difficulty remained for most of their readers to obtain an adequate idea of the status of the problem. A very real difficulty, for the information is scattered through a large number of books and periodicals, many of them very scarce and hardly to be obtained in the ordinary way, except by chance. It is partly on account of this inaccessibility of the sources of information that it has happened that not a few painstaking and scholarly writers have been themselves led astray through lack of complete information.

There are two works that are, however, readily available which contain dissertations upon our subject: Mackey's History of Freemasonry and Gould's Concise History. The student should certainly read both. Gould's Collected Essays, which also is still in print, has quite a good deal on various disputed points, though it must be said that it is not very easy to follow by one who has no previous acquaintance with the subject. Also Bro. H. L. Haywood gave a brief account of the general situation in the fourth volume of THE BUILDER, but without going into any detail.

But the two writers first mentioned were more concerned with setting forth their own opinions than in giving an account of the development of the different theories and the arguments advanced to support them. And it is this that we propose to do. We regard this series of articles as being part of the Prolegomena to the history of the Masonic Ritual upon which the present authors have been collaborating for a number of years. This latter subject is so extraordinarily complex that it can only be dealt with piecemeal. No Mason will need to be told how intimately the question of degrees is bound up with the ritual. If some definite standing ground can be found as to the origin and antiquity of our present degrees a number of important points will have been fixed in regard to the ritual. Our present purpose, therefore, is to present, as fully as is practicable, the history of this more limited question, with the arguments and evidence and full references, with the hope that it may save others from much wearisome and often fruitless search.

THE Scope of the Discussion

It must be confessed that we have been unable to make an absolutely exhaustive examination of everything that has been said upon the subject. This perhaps is of the less consequence seeing so much that has been advanced is really of no value whatever. In any case it would have been practically impossible. We believe, however, that we have collected everything of real importance.

The chronological order will be followed roughly, though merely for the sake of convenience, as it is not so much a history of the problem that we wish to present as a clear idea of the facts available as evidence, and the deductions drawn from them and the hypotheses devised to interpret them. It will be seen that there has been a definite development of opinion; that what at first seem quite irreconcilable interpretations are really connected, and that there has been a convergence of opinion towards agreement. That complete agreement will ever be reached is not likely in so difficult an investigation. For this reason we propose to give the actual evidence as fully as possible so that our readers will, as we hope, not only be informed of what opinions have been advanced and by whom, but also will be in a position to judge and criticize for themselves.

The earlier Masonic writers accepted all the traditions and legends at their face value. This was true even when they were men of some pretensions to scholarship and learning. When the Book of Constitutions was first published it is true that Dr. Anderson's account of the History of Masonry was scoffed at by profane critics, yet we must not judge him or them by our own standards. These same critics were accepting other fables as serious history. Though there was much scepticism in intellectual circles yet it was rather a general attitude of doubt than a careful and painstaking criticism. It may be said that scientific history did not come into existence until the nineteenth century, though of course like everything else it had its forerunners and predecessors in previous centuries. Also it may be said, too, that the methods of scientific history were not brought to bear upon the records of Freemasonry until within the memory of men still living. It was inevitable, then, that such writers as Anderson, Martin Clare, Dermott, Preston and Dr. Oliver should accept tradition for fact, without any real attempt to sift the truth from pure fable. This naive belief in Masonic legends is by no means a thing wholly of the past, but it is probable that the great majority of Masons who read anything at all about the Institution to which they belong, are aware of the difficulties, inconsistencies and absurdities which a literal acceptance of tradition involves.

Even such a credulous and enthusiastic writer as Dr. Oliver, whom we have just mentioned, who published his first book more than a hundred years ago (in 1823 to be precise), was gradually forced into a more critical attitude during his long life of literary activity, as his later works here and there quite plainly show. He is especially mentioned here as he appears to have been the first, so far as we have been able to discover, to advance a theory that has had many later supporters, and which still influences the opinions of many today. This theory is that the degree (or Order) of the Royal Arch was fabricated by the so-called "Antients" or by Laurence Dermott, their real leader and moving spirit, by the simple process of cutting the original third degree in two. It has been called the "mutilation" hypothesis; and some such idea as this was possibly in the minds of

those who framed the peculiarly worded statement sanctioned by the United Grand Lodge of England at the Reconciliation of Antients and Moderns in 1813,

... that pure Antient Masonry consists of three degrees and no more; viz., those of the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft and the Master Mason (including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch[1]).

This definition of the original, simon-pure, brand of Masonry was, however, much more probably a compromise between the two systems of the Ancients and Moderns, rather than intended as a historical verdict. Dr. Oliver's accounts of what happened are as little to be accepted without examination and confirmation as Dr. Anderson's before him. His theory is beautifully simple. The "Antients" to him were purely schismatic, what in America would now be called clandestine. As propaganda they, or Dermott for them, devised a more complex series of degrees, ending with the Royal Arch. In reality they gave nothing more to their initiates than the original and regular Grand Lodge (i.e. that of the "Moderns"), but made them go through more grades to obtain it[2]. For this reason, it was supposed (i.e. that the Royal Arch was truly part of the Third Degree) it had to be retained at the Union, yet because it had now become a separate entity it was distinguished from it; really a most illogical position to take, and one that could only be possible, we may perhaps say, to the English, with their concern for what will work in practice and their total disregard for, and sublime indifference to theoretical consistency. The weakness of this whole hypothesis is manifest upon examination; it leaves quite unaccounted for the fact that the "Moderns" had long worked the Royal Arch themselves; that Dermott, so far from inventing it, regularly received it in Ireland before he ever came to London; that it was in existence quite a number of years before the "Antients" organized their Grand Lodge^[3]; and finally, that the Grand Lodge of Scotland never recognized it at all, though giving no more in the Third Degree than was communicated in England.

A word may be said here on the terms Antient and Modern. Although there is now really very little excuse for misapprehending them yet there still seem to be brethren who, deriving their knowledge from the works of earlier writers, are inclined to suppose the former, or their leaders, to have been clandestine impostors, and the latter legitimate and regular. So far as the latter adjective goes, the Moderns were the Regulars, for they first used this term as a description of their lodges, and added it to the older general epithets, "just and perfect," or "right" or "true." Regular in the first place meant connected with and subordinate to the Grand Lodge of 1717. Whether intentionally or not it was a very diplomatic move, as the inference naturally seemed to follow that all other Masons and Mason's lodges were irregular, whereas they were simply independent, remaining in all respects as "just and perfect" and legitimate as the "regulars" themselves. The distinction really, as first used, was exactly analogous to that in the Roman Catholic Church between

¹ Gould, Concise History, Revised Edition, p. 261

Oliver, Revelations of a Square (1855), Chap. 4, p. 91. He says the "refractory brethren ... commenced the practise of a species of Freemasonry unknown in former times. They instituted a novel degree, which they called the Royal Arch, compounded out of a portion of the third degree, and from various continental innovations, which gave them a vast advantage in the minds of curious and unthinking persons, over the pure and ancient system practiced by the old Grand Lodge" (i. e., the "Modern" Grand Lodge), and he intimates the same thing in other places. See his Origin of the Royal Arch Degree and Discrepancies of Masonry.

³ Gould, op. cit. pp. 235 and 252.

"regular" and "parochial" clergy. The latter are not in any sense irregular, the former are called regular simply because they are under a Rule (regulus), or in other words belong to some Monastic Order and are subject to its special discipline. So the "regular" Masons were those under the newly formed Grand Lodge, who submitted to its jurisdiction. They were presumably free to give up their own independence if they so chose, but they had no right to legislate for those who did not care to join them[4].

The older writers, having little but Anderson's account to go upon, assumed that Masonry was practically extinct in 1717, and that those who formed the Grand Lodge were the last remnant who by this action saved and revived the Institution, and that all Masons since that time are descended from them. Even today, scholars who certainly know better are sometimes led, in the carelessness of enthusiasm, in making a speech or proposing a toast, and even in writing, to assert that the United Grand Lodge of England is the Mother Grand Lodge of the World. As rhetoric this may pass, for in a limited sense (if we can properly regard it as the same organization as that of 1717 - one might say it was rather a daughter with two mothers!) it does seem true that it was the parent of the Grand Lodge organization of Freemasonry. In the sense that all Masons in the world have derived their Masonry from it, it is not only not true, but a very misleading assertion. Even Hughan fell into this erroneous way of speaking while intent on endeavouring to prove that the differences between Antient and Modern were really negligible^[5]. In truth the four lodges that formed themselves into a Grand Lodge at the Goose and Gridiron Tavern were but a small minority, a very small minority indeed, of those then existing. There were others, equally "just and perfect," "right" and "true," all over England, Scotland and probably Ireland, and, as is all but certain, even in London itself. The Grand Lodges of the two latter countries owed nothing (at that time) to England or to London, except the idea and the example; and it is far from certain that even the idea was a wholly new one. In fact it seems to have been an attempt to revive the General Assembly spoken of in the old MS. Constitutions, whatever that may have been, and it is possible that other attempts had been made before, and failed, leaving no record. The "New Articles" that appear in one group of these documents may, like the "New Regulations" of Grand Master Payne, have been the work of some earlier attempted reorganization, and such a supposition would give some basis for Anderson's describing the action taken in 1717 as "reviving the quarterly communications." But this by the way. Originally the Assembly seems to have been a general court, in the old sense of the word, or as we would say today, a general meeting, composed of every Mason in a given district. Such actually was the London Grand Lodge in the first years of its existence. The same idea probably underlay the later action of the old lodge at York, when on certain special occasions it called itself a General or Grand Lodge. Presumably every Mason within reach of York was in theory supposed to attend and take part in its proceedings. What the lodge at York tried to do was done elsewhere, as notably in Scotland by Mother Kilwinning and in Germany by Royal York of Friendship.

Now according to Anderson's account in his revised edition of the Constitutions, George Payne, Esq., upon his election and installation as Grand Master in 1718 desired any

⁴ The statement in the text needs modification of course. Though it is far too big a subject to dispose of in a note yet it may be said here that there was a shadow of a right. Had the first Grand Lodge remained an annual Assembly of all Masons in London, and restricted its jurisdiction to the London area it might have claimed, on the basis of the Old Charges, to be the sole arbiter of things Masonic within its own limits.

⁵ Hughan, English Rite, p. 123.

brethren to bring to the Grand Lodge any old writings and records concerning Masons and Masonry, in order to shew the usages of Antient times; and this year several old copies of the Gothic Constitutions were produced and collated.

Two years later he was again elected and Anderson notes that

This year at some private Lodges, several very valuable manuscripts (for they had nothing yet in print) concerning the Fraternity, their Lodges, Regulations, Charges, Secrets and Usages (particularly one writ by Mr. Nicholas Stone, the Warden of Inigo Jones), were too hastily burnt by some scrupulous Brothers, that those papers might not fall into strange hands.

We must put these two statements with that in the prefatory note to the General Regulations, that they were

Compiled, first by Brother George Payne, Esq. when Grand Master A. D. 1720, and approved by the General Assembly at Stationer's Hall on 20th June, 1721. Next by order of the Duke of Montagu when Grand Master, the Author, James Anderson, compared them with the Antient records of the Fraternity and digested them into this method with proper additions and explications from the said records; and the Grand Lodge having revised and approved them, ordered 'em to be printed in the Book of Constitutions, on 25th March, 1722.

From this it would appear that the chief concern of the new organization was legislation and regulation, and not ritual. In the second of the three excerpts the words "Secrets and Usages" seem to go beyond this, however, and also another statement, that the meeting of Grand Lodge (Dec. 27, 1721) at which the committee was appointed to examine Anderson's manuscript for the Book of Constitutions was made very entertaining by the Lectures of some old Masons.

It would certainly appear from this that there was some interest in the ritual, indefinite as the notice is. We cannot be absolutely certain whether the word "lecture" is here used in the present Masonic sense, or the more general one of every day speech, but it would almost seem that the probability is in favour of the former interpretation, and it might perhaps be regarded as additional confirmation of this that he also uses the word "bright" as a technicality for a brother well conversant with the usages of the Craft.

THE GRAND LODGE AND THE RITUAL

However though undoubtedly the members of the Grand Lodge were occupied to some extent with the ritual, it would be a grave mistake to suppose that it was taken up in the way it would be today if a new Grand Lodge were organized. There would be less danger of misconception in the British Isles, and Europe generally, where very great liberty has always been used by individual lodges in this matter, than there might be in America. The method adopted was embodied in Regulation XI:

All particular lodges are to observe the same usages as much as possible; in order to which, and also for cultivating a good understanding among Free Masons, some members of every Lodge shall be deputed to visit the other Lodges as often as shall be thought convenient.

And in the second edition Anderson adds to this that:

The same usages, for Substance, are actually observed in every Lodge; which is much owing to visiting Brothers who compare the usages.

This shows us that exact uniformity did not exist, but that practically this rule had produced something approaching general agreement in ritual essentials. Anderson's remark of course applies only to London, and the area so quaintly described as "within the Bills of Mortality." Outside of the London district much wider variations undoubtedly appeared.

A frequently quoted passage from the introductory pages of Dermott's Ahiman Rezon[6] may help to give some further light on the subject. He has just previously been commenting on Anderson's brief statement that Sir Christopher Wren "neglected the office of Grand Master," which he accepts as a fact, and explains as due to the unjust and ungrateful treatment he received at the hands of the authorities, as well as to his age, ascribing the decay of Freemasonry to the disgust and indignation of the brethren generally at this action, and their refusal to accept the new nominee of the King. This of course is all unhistorical, there being no evidence whatever that Wren was Grand Master, or even a Freemason for that matter[7], and still less that his successor in the office of "Surveyor of the Royal Works" was ipso facto Grand Master. However, Dermott after stating that though inactive in London:

... the Lodges in the country, particularly in Scotland and at York, kept up their ancient formalities, customs and usages, without alteration, adding or diminishing, to this hour, from whence they may justly be termed the most ancient, etc.

from which he leaves his reader to infer that his Grand Lodge, being in fraternal relationship with Scotland at least, was likewise entitled to be styled "Ancient." And then in the next paragraph he goes on to make the statement above referred to, which runs as follows:

About the year 1717 some joyous companions, who had passed the degree of a craft (though very rusty), resolved to form a lodge for themselves, in order (by conversation) to recollect what had formerly been dictated to them, or if that should be found impracticable, to substitute something new, which might for the future pass for Masonry amongst

⁶ Ahiman Rezon, second edition, Address "to the Gentlemen of the Most Ancient and Honorable Fraternity."

⁷ Gould, op. cit. p. 100. See also his larger History.

themselves. At this meeting the question was asked, whether any person in the assembly knew the Master's part. and beings answered in the negative, it was resolved, nem. con., that the deficiency should be made up with a new composition, and what fragments of the old order found amongst them, should be immediately reformed and made more pliable to the humours of the people.

And he then goes on to give an intentionally ridiculous and fantastic account of the changes made, which, nevertheless, quite obviously hints at the differences in the ritual forms of the two organizations for those able to read between the lines.

This whole passage till comparatively recently was taken as absolutely baseless, illnatured, slander. But the juster view of the position of the Antients and their claims has led to a material change in this judgment. What Dermott wrote is obviously "propaganda," but he was too clever a controversialist, and we may fully believe, too good a man and Mason, to deliberately publish what he knew to be false. It was some forty-seven or eight years after the event that this was written, which though a considerable period was not too long for personal reminiscences to have come to him at least at second hand. He naturally put them in as unfavourable a light as possible for his opponents, but it is not straining probability to suppose that some information may have reached him other than the official account given in Anderson's second edition of the Constitutions. The points specially to be noted in what he says are these: first, that those who formed the Modern (but senior) Grand Lodge were Fellowcrafts but not Master Masons, that, secondly, they invented a third degree, and last, that there was considerable uncertainty among them as to what was ritually correct. The possible significance of the first two points will appear later. The last would be fully accounted for by supposing that a number of varying usages were represented. As we have seen from what Anderson himself says, this would appear to have actually been the case, and there is other evidence to the same effect that we shall have to consider in due course

So far what has been said is merely clearing the ground for the discussion of the question in hand. The whole matter is so exceedingly complex that it is very difficult to present it clearly, and still more difficult to present it impartially. Any attempt at simplification would almost of necessity involve treating it from an ex parte standpoint, and though the present authors have their own opinion, as will appear in the sequel, the intention here is to present the evidence and not to argue for any special conclusion.

THE REACTION FROM TRADITIONAL VIEWS

We noted that Dr. Oliver, toward the end of his career, had given up the traditional history and legends of Freemasonry, and to those familiar with the character of his many works the fact itself will be significant, for he was the complete reverse of a sceptical or critical scholar, and the evidence would have to be very strong to make him discard his earlier belief. His change of attitude, however, was not very clearly or definitely made, nor did he give his reasons in any detail.

The next author of note in this connection was David Murray Lyon, who published his History of the lodge of Edinburgh in 1873, six years after Dr. Oliver's demise. Just how much influence, if any, the belated scepticism of the elder author had upon the views of the younger we have no means of estimating, but from Lyon's own references to his predecessor it may have been considerable. He was certainly familiar with Oliver's works for he quotes him on this very point. The credulous enthusiasm of the one would produce a mental reaction in a historian of Lyon's type, which would be further reinforced by his predecessor's later and rather reluctant reversal of opinion. However it was, Lyon played the part of an iconoclast in Masonic tradition.

His work deals, as its title indicates, with the history of the old Lodge of Edinburgh or "Mary's Chapel," but in dealing with this he was obliged practically to write a history of Freemasonry in Scotland. In his work he gives in full the Schaw Statutes, the St. Clair Charters, and copious extracts from the minutes of the Lodge of Mary's Chapel (the earliest of those still extant being dated July, 1599) and quotations from the minutes of other old lodges of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Upon these he bases the following conclusions regarding Scotch Masonry, to which he strictly confines himself. That the operative craft of Masonry was fully organized from an early date, though he does not allow anything very definite before 1590; that the Masons possessed a secret spoken of as "the Word;" that this was communicated to those newly entered in a simple ceremony, great stress being laid on its simplicity; that there is no trace of any further secrets than this Mason Word, which apparently was communicated to Apprentices; that the passing of "Fellows of Craft" could not have been a degree in the present sense of the word because Apprentices were present when the new Fellows were "received"; and that from a very early period a considerable number of non- operatives, mostly of high social position, became members of the lodges, and in some cases presided in them, although most of the old lodges retained a genuinely operative character much later than was the case in England. Two further conclusions are obvious, though not particularly stressed, that the later Speculative system was intimately connected with the earlier Operative organization when it was introduced or came it being, and that the Speculative Masonry of the London Grand Lodge in 1721 was sufficiently like that of the Operative Masonry of Edinburgh to enable the secretary of Mary's Chapel to record, under date of Aug. 24 of that year, that:

... John Theophilus Desaguliers, Fellow of the Royall Societie and Chaplain in Ordinary to his Grace James Duke of Chandois, late Generall Master of the Mason's Lodges in England, being in town and desirous to have a conference with the Deacon, Warden and

Master Masons of Edinr., which was accordingly granted, and finding him qualified in all points of Masonry, they received him as a Brother into their Societie.[8]

From this entry, and the two following ones, dated Aug. 25 and 28, on which days it seems that a number of socially prominent men petitioned and were "admitted and received Entered Apprentices and Fellow-Crafts accordingly," Lyon concluded that Desaguliers had come to Scotland on a missionary expedition.

There can be but one opinion as to the nature and object of Dr. Desaguliers' visit to the Lodge of Edinburgh. In the interval between his initiation in London and his affiliation as a member of the Scottish Fraternity, he had been a prime mover in instituting the English Grand Lodge; and had in conjunction with other learned craftsmen been engaged in the fabrication of a "Master's part," in the preparation of a constitution for the newly formed body, and in the catechetical arrangement of its lectures. [9]

He goes on to say that he was no doubt "animated by a desire for the spread of the new system" and that it appears probable that, through his social position, he had influenced the attendance of the Provost and Magistrates and other city magnates to apply for entrance to the Masonic fellowship "in order to give a practical illustration of the system "with which his name was so closely associated," and goes on to say:

... it is more than probable that on both occasions the ceremony of entering and passing would, as far as the circumstances of the Lodge would permit, be conducted by Desaguliers himself in accordance with the ritual he was anxious to introduce.

In comment on this we must say that there seems to be a good deal of conjecture in this statement, especially for a member of a school of Masonic research that so strenuously objects to conjectures when made by others. All we are told definitely is that the officers and members of Mary's Chapel found Desaguliers "qualified in all points of Masonry" whatever that may have meant exactly to the "Clerk, Ro. Alison," who recorded it. "All points" seems to suggest something more than a single word as the solitary secret of Masonry. It is true that Lyon himself says, [10]

... if the communication by Mason Lodges of secret words or signs constituted a degrees term of modern application to the esoteric observances of the Masonic body - then there was, under the purely Operative regime, only one known to Scotch Lodges - viz., that in which, under an oath, apprentices obtained a knowledge of the Mason Word and all that was implied in the expression.

What was implied by the expression is more fully set out just before:

But that this talisman consisted of something more than a word is evident from "the secrets of the Mason Word" being referred to in the minute-book of the lodge of Dunblane, and from the further information drawn from that of Haughfoot - viz., that in 1707 the word was accompanied by a grip.

⁸ Lyon, History of the Lodge of Edinburgh, p. 150.

⁹ Ibid p. 151.

¹⁰ Gould, op. cit. p. 182, gives three instances between 1649 and 1691 where the phrase was used by non-Masons.

Lyon therefore seems to admit, rather grudgingly it would appear, for he does not put it definitely, that what was known as the "Mason's Word" by the world at large,[11] implied a secret ceremony exceedingly "bare and simple" though - and certain accompaniments, such as the grip definitely mentioned at Haughfoot, and possibly (or probably?) a sign or signs. Such a set of secrets might well have been all that was meant by Alison's phrase "all points of Masonry."

But Lyon proceeds to conjecture that Desaguliers not only wanted to propagate the new secrets alleged to have been fabricated by himself and others in London shortly before, but that he exemplified (as we should say) the new "part" or degree, at the two following meetings. Now the record apparently, at least as quoted by Lyon, does not even say he was present, though we must allow that the Doctor's visit most probably did have some connection with the rather exceptional influx of highly placed Candidates. The fact that Desaguliers had been invited by the authorities of the city of Edinburgh to give them advice, as a scientific expert on hydraulics, on a proposed system of waterworks would account for it in part. This fact, which, apparently, was not known to Lyon, tends very much to lessen the probability of the supposition that the "learned Doctor" was there chiefly in the capacity of a propagator of new degrees. That he was something of what in America would be called a ritualist would seem to follow from the fact that he was chosen, according to Anderson, to act as Master of the "Occasional Lodge" in which the Prince of Wales was made an "Enter'd Prentice and Fellow Craft" at Kew on Nov. 5, 1737, but as Gould points out[12] the statement that he was the "fabricator" of a "Master's Part" is itself pure conjecture, based upon nothing more than the further purely hypothetical supposition that such a part was fabricated, and that such an outstanding figure in the new organization, from his ability and education, might plausibly be supposed to have had a finger in the pie.

We may conclude, it would seem, considering all the facts, that Desaguliers was present at these two subsequent meetings of the Lodge of Mary's Chapel; it may be safely said indeed that it would have been strange if he were not; but that he took a prominent part in whatever ceremonies were performed is pure guesswork; and that he exemplified the ritual of a quite new degree seems impossible, for he would first have had to communicate it to the officers and members of the lodge before it could be given to the candidates. The more the point is considered the more impossible it is seen to be. why should the conservative members of this ancient lodge, who had such a "guid conceit" of themselves, accept a novelty from a "Southron"? And except as a novelty, which he, as one of its inventors, could communicate as he pleased, he could hardly have given it, for the very simplest form imaginable of any Master's part that corresponded to our Third Degree would need at least three to carry it out. On this ground alone Lyon's theory would seem impossible.

¹¹ Gould, op. cit. p. 182, gives three instances between 1649 and 1691 where the phrase was used by non-Masons.

¹² Gould, History of Freemasonry, Yorston edition, vol. 3, p. 39.

PART 2

IN discussing the visit of Dr. Desaguliers to the Lodge of Mary's Chapel, and his reception as a brother, fully "qualified in all points of Masonry," Murray Lyon says that the fact that the members of the lodge and the learned Doctor:

... so thoroughly understood each other on all the points of Masonry, shows that either in their main features the secrets of the old Operative Lodges of the two countries were somewhat similar, or that an inkling of the novelty had already been conveyed into Scotland.

Not impossible, of course, however unlikely it may seem, supposing a novelty to have existed. In this case some of those present who had received it might have assisted; but it is all guess-work, and guess-work founded on conjecture at that, for there is no proof that any new degree had then been invented. The very first known allusion to an invention is that in Dr. Stukeley's diary, under Dec. 28 of the following year, 1722, where he speaks of making two friends members of the Order of the Book, or Roman Knighthood[13]. Even if the Master's part was deliberately fabricated there seems no reason that has so far appeared to make us suppose it was done before August, 1721, the date of this occurrence.

Lyon also advances another argument in the following passage:

Some years ago, and when unaware of Desaguliers' visit to Mary's Chapel, we publicly expressed our opinion that the system of Masonic Degrees which for nearly a century and a half has been known in Scotland as Freemasonry, was an importation from England, seeing that in the processes of initiation and advancement conformity to the new ceremonial required the adoption of genuflexions, postures, etc., which in the manner of their use - the country being then purely Presbyterian - were regarded by our forefathers with abhorrence as relics of Popery and Prelacy. [14]

Whatever weight this psychological consideration may have is all against the acceptance of a novelty from England, so at least it seems to us. The country was not less Presbyterian in 1721 than in the years before that. There is really far more likelihood of "genuflections" having survived in an old secret ritual to which each individual was introduced separately and to which he got accustomed in the corporate atmosphere, than in the acceptance of such ceremonies by the Craft en masse, or at least by lodges, as an importation from another and prelatical country. In saying this we are not here advancing any alternative hypothesis, but only that, without the entirely conjectural premises imagined by Lyon, the natural conclusion from the facts cited would be this, that whatever the Masonry of London in 1721 may have been, it was sufficiently like that of Scotland to enable a member of the premier Grand Lodge to "work his way into" the "head lodge" (as the Schaw Statutes call it) of the Northern Kingdom. Gould[15] says of the incident that it:

... may mean that Desaguliers passed a satisfactory examination in all the Masonic Secrets then known in the Scottish metropolis, or the words italicized [i. e. in all points of

¹³ Gould. History of Freemasonry, Vol. 3, p. 40, note 6.

¹⁴ Lyon. History of the Lodge of Edinburg, p. 153.

¹⁵ Gould. Op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 17, note 3.

Masonry] may simply import - in Masonic phrase - that the two parties to the conference were mutually satisfied with the result.

This seems, whether so intended or not, to throw a cloud of innuendo over what in itself seems fairly clear. The phrase in the minute book is sufficiently in line with our present terminology to make very good and obvious sense. Gould's two interpretations either mean the same thing, in which case one was only a paraphrase of the other and hardly worth while, or else they imply, the one that Desaguliers may have been in possession of Masonic secrets unknown in Mary's Chapel, or that other considerations besides those included in our phrase, "strict trial and due examination," were taken into account (such as, for instance, his known position in the London organization) and that actually there may have been little or nothing in common, esoterically speaking, between them. Gould, in a number of places, both in his History and in various essays and articles on the subject, insists on the difference between English and Scottish Masonry at this period, and it might almost seem that his intention here was to lessen the force of a record that implies there was no essential difference in ritual matters. Certainly the natural implication of the whole record is that Desaguliers was formally and Masonically examined; such an examination would necessarily be in a mode that would also satisfy the examinee of the right of the examiners to question him. And finally the phraseology used does not indicate the slightest recognition of any deficiency of Masonic information in Mary's Chapel.

Gould seemed to depend entirely on Lyon for his estimate of the esoteric side of the early Scottish Craft, and it is now necessary to see what the considerations were from which the latter drew his conclusions. The first in order, and one that he dwells on repeatedly is the following provision in the Schaw Statutes. These it may be understood were formulated by the King's Master Mason in his official capacity, and had the force of law; although like all such regulations they were based on the customs and usages of the trade; and it may be added that the various provisions run closely parallel to those of the Old Charges. The passage in point is as follows:

Item, that na maister or fallow of craft be ressauit nor admittit wtout the numer of sex maisteris and twa enterit prenteissis, the wardene of that ludge being ane of the said sex and that the day of the ressauyng of the said fallow craft or maister be ordlie buikit and his name and mark insert in the said buik wt the names of his sex admitteris and enterit prenteissis, and the names of the intendaris that salbe chosin to everie persone to be alsua insert in thair buik. Providing alwayis that na man be atmittit wtout ane assay and sufficient tryall of skill and worthynes in his vocatioun and craft. [16]

On this Lyon remarks:

The presence of so many masters was doubtless intended as a barrier to the advancement of incompetent craftsmen - and not for the communication of secrets with which entered apprentices were unacquainted, for the arrangement referred to proves beyond question that whatever secrets were imparted in and by the Lodge were, as a means of recognition, patent to the intrant. [17]

The last sentence seems somewhat obscure, but we take it that here the "intrant" is the candidate for the mastership, and that it means he already knew the secrets. He goes on to

¹⁶ Lyon. Op. cit., p. 10.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 17.

say:

The "trial of skill in ,his craft," the production of an "essay piece," and the insertion of his name and mark in the Lodge book, with the names of his six "admitters" and "intendaris," were merely practical tests and confirmations of the applicant's qualifications ... and the apprentice's attendance at such an examination could not be otherwise than beneficial to him because of the opportunity it afforded for increasing his professional knowledge.

To this one is inclined emphatically to dissent. Presence at an examination may help a prospective candidate in several ways to prepare to pass one himself, but not very much in gaining skill and knowledge - and the apprentice's instruction was in the hands of his intenders. This could hardly have been "professional" instruction, which he would receive in due course working for his master. Another point, in the clause of the statutes referred to the requirement of the essay and examination comes last, as a proviso, and might be taken quite naturally as referring to a prior condition that had to be met, more especially as it is laid down at greater length in a preceding clause. Further, the reference to intenders does not read as if it referred to those who had instructed him as an apprentice, who were now being discharged, but as appointed to instruct him as a fellow of craft. But in what should he need instruction, seeing he had just passed an examination as to his professional fitness?

He refers to this again[¹⁸] after having given some typical excerpts from the minutes of Mary's Chapel ranging from January, 1600, to March, 1603. He notes that in such of these items as refer to the passing of fellows and masters that the custom of the lodge agreed with the old Statutes of 1598. Then a little later he makes the statement that:

[17] Ibid., p. 74.

The attendance of apprentices in the lodge during the making of a fellow-craft is confirmed by the minutes of Nov. 26, 1601, Nov. 10, 1606, Feb. 24, 1637, and June 23, 1637. This fact demolishes the theory propounded by the representatives of the Grand Lodge of Scotland at the Conference on the Mark Degree, held at London in April, 1871 - viz., that apprentices "were merely present at the constitution of the Lodge" for the reception of fellows of craft or masters, but "were not present during the time the business was going on."

Only one of these four critical entries is given by him, which runs as follows:

Tertio Martij 1601. The qlk day Blais Hamilton, prenteis sum tyme to Thomas Weir, present warden and frieman and burges of Edinbruch, is admittet and ressavit in fallow of craft of the massoun craft, and he's done he's dewitie in all poyntts as effeirs, to the satisfaction and contentment of the dekyn, warden, and haill Mrs. of the said craft under-subscriving and marking; and upon the haill premisses the said Blais Hamiltoun askit and tuik instruments fra me notar publico underwritten the scribe. Ita est Mr. Gibsone no'rious. [19]

The signatures and marks of those present, other than the secretary, are not given. Hamilton evidently received from the latter a legal instrument or certificate of the fact that

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 74.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 73.

he had been admitted a master, which would entitle him to the freedom of the trade in the city of Edinburgh. The point of the entry from Lyon's point of view must lie, not in its form, which is quite normal, but in the fact that it can be demonstrated that someone or more of those who signed it or appended their marks can be shown to have been at the time only apprentices. Thus if the name of such an individual be found in an earlier minute which records his being entered as an apprentice, and again in a later one as being received as a fellow, then it would follow that when he attested the intervening record he was an apprentice and present at the proceedings. He does not mention however the name or names in point.

Nevertheless it is not obvious how such records, whether few or many, demolish the theory alluded to above. To do so logically requires an unexpressed premise. Put formally the argument runs:

N. or M. was an apprentice. He signed the minutes.

Therefore, an apprentice was present during the whole proceedings of the lodge.

It is obviously a non sequitur as it stands, and requires the introduction of some such step as this;

Everyone signing the minutes was present in the lodge throughout the whole proceedings.

Quite obviously this would be a pure assumption, though of course it might be in any given case a true one. Nevertheless the fact that Masonic lodges all over the world, outside the United States (and in the United States before 1830 or thereabouts) require in theory the presence of all grades when the lodge is formed and opened, and that those of a lower degree retire when there is any work to be done in a higher one, and return when that is concluded, it would seem that the theory of the Scottish representatives at the Mark Degree Conference is not disproved by these minutes, though they do not, of course, establish it. But it remains a possibility.

One more assertion is made by Lyon in favour of his thesis, and that is that apprentices were sometimes elected to the chief offices - Deacon or Warden - of the Lodge of Kilwinning. He cites no record but seems to promise it later on in his work, though this we have been unable to discover. Gould however^[20] refers to an account in the Freemason's Magazine for 1863 of this old lodge, as a reference in support of the same assertion, and in another place^[21] he states that the Earl of Cassilis was elected a Deacon (principal officer) though not received as a Fellowcraft till the next year. This gentleman distinguished himself, by the way, at the battle of Marston Moor, fighting for King Charles I. Ashmole was also in the Royalist service, acting as a Quarter Master at Oxford, the Royalist headquarters, while Col. Mainwaring, who was initiated with him at Barrington, was in the Parliamentary forces. The possible significance of these and like facts - Robert Moray or Murray, for example, was initiated by some members of the Lodge of Edinburgh at the siege of Newcastle a few years before - has, curiously enough, never been emphasized. There may have been other and more practical reasons than mere curiosity, or desire for good fellowship, that prompted these men of high social position in stormy political periods to seek to unite themselves with a widespread fraternity. However, returning to the

²⁰ Gould. Op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 56, note 3.

²¹ Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 15.

subject in hand, it certainly seems that the election of an earl, who had just joined the lodge, to the chief position was at least exceptional, and probably a purely formal honour. It seems that an active deputy was also elected to do the work. There have been cases where a lady has been appointed honorary colonel of a regiment, but it is not to be supposed that she would know very much about its administration and discipline. The position of the apprentice was by the nature of the case subordinate, and his election to preside over a lodge would be exceptional even if the question of degrees be left entirely out of consideration. Each such case would have to be judged on its merits. Gould insists very strongly on the differences between the Masonries of the two kingdoms, and we believe there was a great difference; but it lay rather in their organization and their relationship to the body politic than in the esoteric secrets, whatever these may have been. The lodges in Scotland seem to have taken the status and functions, to a varying extent, of guilds, a status and function that was really foreign to their original character and purpose, and this led to all kinds of compromises and complications. Thus it seems that grown men, though fully competent professionally, and actually employing other men, and even having apprentices of their own, in some cases ranked only as Entered Apprentices^[22]. Such individuals could have been apprentices only in a purely formal sense, and were in fact small masters, without the "freedom" of the city. When matters got into such an abnormal state the further anomaly of choosing an apprentice to preside does not seem so extraordinary. We have then to consider its real bearing on the claim that receiving a "fellow craft" involved no further esoteric ceremony.

In the two cases cited by Gould[23] the latter was where a nobleman was chosen, apparently in his absence, and a deputy elected to do the work. This hardly seems a safe instance to build on. In the other we are told that apprentices were "not infrequently" chosen to preside pro tem, when the Deacon was absent. This again is not conclusive, and could hardly be so unless there were a definite record of an apprentice acting as Deacon or Warden when other apprentices were received as fellows. This would certainly be an amazing anomaly in any case, whether there were secret ceremonies or not.

There is just one more point to be made before we pass on from the consideration of Lyon's views; and that is why did the Schaw Statutes, and other regulations based on them, insist that no one was to be received as a fellow without at least six masters and two apprentices? Lyon's suggestion as to the masters is possible enough from the practical point of view, but there is no practical reason for the apprentices being there. The supposition that it was for its educative value is simply ridiculous. Lyon was unacquainted (at least he gives them no consideration) with the vestiges of ritual evidence that have come down to us. It certainly seems that this regulation merely embodied a ritual requirement. If so it is quite impossible to say what the presence of apprentices really implied from the bare record that they were there.

²² Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 15.

²³ Gould. Op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 14, and Vol. 3, p. 56.

SUMMARY OF LYON'S ARGUMENT

We have given so much space to Lyon because his conclusions have been largely used by the other proponents of the single initiation hypothesis in its various forms. And it may be as well to briefly summarize his position. He insists that the legal requirement for the presence of apprentices when a fellow or master was received is proof that there were no ritual secrets involved peculiar to the higher rank which were unknown to the lower. This is really the chief foundation of his argument. He further deduces from the bare and laconic references in the early records of the old lodges and from the fact that in some cases individuals has apparently "made masons" single handed, that the ritual or ceremony must have been of the barest and simplest character, consisting (we judge, though has does not definitely say so) of the administration of an oath of secrecy and the communication of a word, which may also have been accompanied by a grip, and possible a sign or signal of some kind. He minimizes the effect of the few minutes that seem to hint at something more as being exceptional, although he uses the equally exceptional cases, of men ranking as apprentices being chosen to preside in the lodge, to support his own contentions. He also advances a psychological argument based on the Presbyterian prejudices of the Scotch which would tend to make them object to "genuflexions" and other like ritual elements, as Popish and superstitious, and that in consequence they would not have employed anything of the kind in their form of "entering apprentices," or "making masons," though he does not seem to think that this prejudice would have tended to hinder the adoption of such ritual practices imported from England in the eighteenth century!

Hughan's Theory of Degrees

From Lyon we go next to William James Hughan. It must be remembered that all the brethren we have mentioned were partially contemporary with each other. It does not appear, so far as we have been able to discover in their work, that Oliver ever corresponded with Lyon and Hughan, but he did with Mackey and Albert Pike, and these two latter brethren were in touch with them. The views of all four were thus, apparently, worked out more or less in communication with each other before they were published.

Hughan's name is associated chiefly in connection with the manuscript Constitutions or Old Charges. Although sundry copies had been previously published in the Masonic press, in full or in part, he was the first to issue a critical edition of as many as were then known. In a paper read before Quatuor Coronati Lodge in 1897 he says that he and Lyon had been working on this subject for over thirty years, and that it was their considered judgment that:

... until the second decade of the last century [1720] there was but the one simple ceremony never were brethren required to leave the lodge because a higher degree was to be worked - for which they were not eligible - but whether Apprentices, Fellow Crafts or Master Masons, all were equally entitled to be present, irrespective of any notion of Degrees whatever. In other words, so far as we can determine, in the light of duly authenticated facts distinct and separate Masonic degrees are never met with, alluded to, or even probable, prior to 1716-7 (circa). [24]

He goes on to say that he believes in the great antiquity of the Fraternity, in the continuity of the Freemasonry of today with that of the Middle Ages, but insists that "the antiquity or continuity of Freemasonry is one thing, and that of Degrees quite another." In which statement all must agree.

The paper referred to contains a summary of the argument and the kind of evidence on which his opinion is based. In matters of this kind reference to the original documents is really essential for complete judgment; with the best will in the world to be fair and impartial a writer's selection of evidence will be coloured by his own views. This we painfully realize in trying to fairly summarize the arguments of these brethren with whose conclusions we do not ourselves agree.

²⁴ Ars Quatuor Coronatorum, Vol. 10, p. 127.

A CHIEFLY NEGATIVE ARGUMENT

Hughan states his purpose as being that of examining "the chief arguments in support of the alleged antiquity of two or more distinct Masonic ceremonies," so that in a sense it is rather critical than constructive. His criticism can be more compendiously handled when we reach the arguments on the other side, at present we will pick out the evidence offered for his own view that has not already been mentioned in presenting Lyon's argument. Yet, as Dr. Chetwode-Crawley pointed out in discussion, his conclusion does seem to rest more on lack of positive evidence for, rather than unambiguous evidence against, which makes it very difficult to summarize his argument. He says:

As to the proof of the existence of two or more separate degrees in England, prior to the last century, where is it to be found? Certainly not in any of the "Old Charges" which were the common property of the Lodge Company, or Fellowship, and were more Specifically addressed to the Apprentices though all grades were addressed therein: "Brethren and Fellows" included all the craftsmen in the Lodge when the scroll was read; an examination of the text of any or either of these ancient documents exhibiting the fact that three classes were then recognized and usually termed Apprentices, Fellows (or Journeymen) and Masters; the last of the trio sometimes meaning a Master Mason (being a skilled workman or employer) and at other times the Master of the Lodge, according to the context, and as illustrated in my "Old Charges of the British Freemasons," 1895.

These old Regulations reminded the senior brethren of their duties as well as instructed the neophytes. Had there been distinct degrees during the 17th century, it is not easy to explain such a uniform silence thereon in all these scrolls, particularly in the later versions containing the "New Articles," first met with about two hundred years ago.[²⁵]

From this extract the negative character of the argument can be seen. The assumption is that had there been two or more secret ceremonies appropriate to the two or more grades that are mentioned, they too would have been distinctly spoken of. This is possible, but hardly certain, especially as there is only the barest allusion to anything esoteric, other than trade secrets, in any case. So little, indeed, that it would be even possible to argue, except for some of the latest documents, very close in date to the period in which degrees do appear, that there was absolutely nothing of this sort implied. Another point that might be made is that these "scrolls" seem to have been used in some places after the critical period, and it might be argued if used then in conjunction with a degree system why not before? But this could of course be countered by saying it was in such cases due to the inconsistencies consequent to a period of transition.

He refers to the initiation of Robert Moray at Newcastle, by certain members of the Lodge of Mary's Chapel, present with the army at Newcastle in 1641. The minute runs as follows:

At Newcastell the 20th day off May 1641. The quilk day ane serten nomber off Mester and others being lafule conveined doeth admit Mr the Right Honerabell Mr Robert Moray, General quarter Mr off the Armie off Scotlan, and the same bing aproven be the hell Mester off the Mesone of the Log off Edenbroth, quherto they heave set to ther handes or markes. [26]

²⁵ Ibid., p. 128.

²⁶ Lyon. Op. cit., p. 98.

The important part of this may be modernized and Englished thus:

The which day a certain number of Masters and other [members] being lawfully convened, did admit [as] Master the Rt. Hon. Mr. Robert Moray, Quartermaster General of the Scottish army, and the same being approved by all the Masters of the Masons of the lodge of Edinburgh they have set thereto their hands or marks.

Hughan comments on this by saying that:

The title of Master, thus conferred, was complimentary only, not a "degree," for even at the "making of masters" then, and for many years subsequently, the presence of two Apprentices was necessary to make the ceremony complete.

For this he refers to the provisions in the Schaw Statutes that have been already discussed in dealing with the position of Murray Lyon.

He then goes on to the initiation of Elias Ashmole at Warrington some five years later. The entry in the diary is as follows:

1646, Oct. 16, 4:30 p. m. I was made a FreeMason at Warrington, in Lancashire, with Coll. Henry Mainwaring of Karincham in Cheshire. [27]

There is no further allusion to the Craft till 1682 when he attended a lodge at Masons Hall in London on March 11, having received "a summons to appear" the previous day. He says:

Accordingly I went, & about noone were admitted into the Fellowship of Free Masons, Sir William Wilson Knight, Capt. Rich: Borthwick, Mr. Will: Woodman, Mr. Wm. Grey, Mr. Samuell Taylour, & Mr. William Wisc.

I was the Senior Fellow among them (it being 35 years since I was admitted). There were present beside my selfe the Fellowes after named:

There is no need to give these names here, but he concludes by saying they all dined:

... at a Noble dinner prepaired at the charge of the New accepted Masons.

Regarding this Hughan remarks:

Ashmole was made a Freemason in 1646, and other gentlemen were likewise "accepted" in 1682, whatever that may mean; just as we read later on of other receptions at Alnwick, Scarborough York, etc., but there is not the slightest reference to more than one ceremony, neither do we ever meet with entries of meetings at which Apprentices were excluded because of not being eligible for a higher degree.

And he goes on to say that "we know there were visitations" by members of English and Scottish lodges between the two countries so that there "must have been some common basis to work on." From which it would follow apparently that there being no more than one degree in Scotland there was only one in England. This however is not explicitly stated, and it is obviously not conclusive. A Scottish E.A. might visit an English lodge today and be present all through the proceedings if there were no work in a higher degree.

It will be noted that Hughan says that certain "gentlemen were 'accepted' in 1682." Ashmole speaks of them as the "New- accepted Masons," but he previously said they

²⁷ The entries are given in full by Gould. Op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 264, and also Concise History, pp. 112 and 116.

"were admitted into the Fellowship of Free Masons," and in the next sentence uses the same word of himself. What is obvious is that Ashmole became a Fellow when he was "made" in 1646, and that the candidates on the later occasion were also made, or admitted Fellows. But Hughan says that to suppose there were two ceremonies performed on the same occasion, two degrees conferred at once, "is wholly fanciful."

He then refers to the lodge at Chester mentioned by Randle Holme, and the "Accepcon" discovered by Conder in the records of the Mason's Company of London, but we get only further instances of individuals being "made" or "accepted." He quotes Conder as authority that in the records of the Mason's Company the term master often described "one able to undertake work as a Master of his Art or Craft," and that:

There is no evidence of any particular ceremony attending the position of Master Mason; possibly it consisted of administering another and a different oath from the one taken by the apprentice on being entered and presented by his Master.

In commenting on this Rylands (also a member of the Mason's Company) said in a note to this article:

On being made free the man became a member of the Company and a fellow of the Craft, though this term is never used in the Books - at the same time he was "admitted to be a Master," Mason understood, as he was not Master of anything else. [28]

This is important, as it shows that the impression these two authorities had gained from their close study of the records of the London Company was that Mastership, if it were not merely another name for the same status as Fellowship, was the necessary qualification to become a Fellow.

To return to Hughan, he next refers to Plot's often quoted account[²⁹] and the note made by Aubrey respecting the "adoption" of Sir Christopher Wren[³⁰] in which as in the records of the Mason's Company there are no references to a second degree. As both authors were non-Masons this does not seem to carry much weight. The next reference is to the Alnwick minutes and orders, the latter dating from September, 1701. The fifth of these requires:

Thatt noe mason shall take any Apprentice [but he must] enter him and give him his charge within one whole year after.

And the ninth runs:

There shall noe apprentice after he have served seven years be admitted or accepted but upon the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel.[31]

Michaelmas, Sept. 29, was the day these "orders" were confirmed and is called the "Gen[32] Head Meeting Day." Hughan says that the minutes, which run from 1703 to 1757, contain:

Not even a solitary reference to Masonic degrees, the "admittances" (or Initiations) from first to last being recorded in the customary manner.

²⁸ A.Q.C., Vol. 9, p. 36.

²⁹ Gould. Concise History, p. 119. See also the larger History.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 120.

³¹ Gould gives the Alnwick Statutes in full. History, Vol. 3 p. 14, et seq.

³² Hughan. Masonic Sketches and Reprints, American Edition p. 112. Also Gould, Concise History, p. 191 and the larger work Vol. 3, pp. 23 and 153.

He adds that this lodge (which was to the last operative in character) never surrendered its independence though "there was undoubtedly a common bond" between it and lodges under the newer regime. As for example a visitor was present at a meeting on Christmas Day 1755 from Canongate Kilwinning Lodge of Edinburgh, long after the three degree system was established elsewhere. The inference does not seem altogether to support Hughan's opinion.

Indeed Gould remarks, in his History, that throughout the entire series of the Alnwick records, with the obscure exception of the twelfth of the "Orders," there is nothing from which, taken by themselves, even "by the greatest latitude of construction," it could be inferred that secrets of any kind were communicated to the brethren of this lodge. It would almost seem that this proves too much. If no esoteric secrets are referred to at all, except in one rule which might well be understood as referring only to trade and personal affairs, how is the absence of degrees supported by these records? The apprentices were "entered and charged," the fellows were "made free and admitted," that is definitely recorded, but no hint is given as to what was implied by these phrases. It seems open to any interpretation. The point is quite important; the records have to be interpreted in any case, and such interpretations are inferences. No one inference is more "fanciful" than another if made with due regard to logic.

PART 3

IN dealing last month with the arguments of William James Hughan in support of the theory that our present second and third degrees were invented some time during the interval between the definite organization of the Grand Lodge in June, 1717, and the publication of the Book of Constitutions in 1728, we had noticed that the minutes of the old lodge at Alnwick, like the pre-Grand Lodge records of the old lodges in Scotland, spoke of entering apprentices and admitting fellows, without any indication of what the terms used implied in the way of ceremonial, esoteric or otherwise, and suggested that aside from some interpretation based on other considerations these references were indeterminate in their bearing upon the problem.

Hughan next refers [33] to the "admission into the fraternity" of six gentlemen at Scarborough in 1705, and the Rules and Minutes of the old lodge at York. The former, which bears the date of 1725, provide only for the "making of a Brother," or "to make a Mason," which proves, he thinks, "the simple and primitive character of the regulations." The minutes use only the formula "admitted and sworn" varied by "sworn and admitted." Yet, as he points out, Dr. Drake, in his famous speech made on St. John's Day, Dec. 27, 1726, referred to three degrees under the initials E.P., F.C. and M.M., though the minutes go on to 1730 recording the swearing and admission only of candidates [34]. One point which Hughan did not seem to have considered was that these records make no reference to any grades, apprentices do not seem to be mentioned at all, nor yet fellows. The head of the lodge was a President, though some of the brethren presiding signed themselves "master," as in 1725, followed by the two wardens, bracketed together without further distinction

A number of other minutes and records of lodges subsequent to the formation of Grand Lodge are cited and discussed, the first being those of the lodge meeting at the Swan and Rummer, which was instituted Feb. 16, 1725-26, the two years being given because it was in the awkward period of transition between Old and New Style of dating. These minutes we unfortunately have not been able to consult. Hughan however definitely states that the degree of Fellow Craft [35] is never mentioned, but he says that this is not remarkable as the secretaries of lodges often ignored this ceremony even during the following decade when it is known from by-laws and other records that it was duly "sandwiched" between the first and third degrees. Consequently the omission in this case is not, in his opinion, conclusive that it was not being worked in this particular lodge. On the other hand it does not prove that it was.

According to the citation made by Hughan, at the meeting on June 8, 1726, Dr. Desaguliers and the Earl of Inchiquin being present as visitors, four gentlemen, including a lord and a baronet, Were admitted Into the Society of Free Masonry and made by the Deputy Grand Master, that is by Dr. Desaguliers. The terms "made" and "admitted" may be important.

³³ In the paper read before Quatuor Coronati Lodge in 1897 A.Q.C., Vol. x, p. 130.

³⁴ Ibid, p. 131.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 134.

The first reference in these minutes to the grade or degree of Master is under the date of April 29, 1727, and gives four names bracketed together with the brief note appended: *Were admitted Masters*.

Hughan says that the first of these names, that of Jno. Dixon Hammond, Esq., appears "in the minutes of a remarkable meeting" in the previous month, March 26, with the remark by Dispensation of the G. Master this Gent, was admitted.

What was remarkable about this meeting does not appear unless it was this entry. This is important as showing that the term "to admit" was not used in a specialized sense as applying to any particular grade or ceremony.

It may be noted also that this lodge was about a year old, if this year 1727 is reckoned New Style, as we presume it was. The next reference to Masters is under date of March 31, 1729, two years later, when in an entry headed

At a particular lodge held for passing of Masters ...

we are told

The Masters Lodge was formed and the following brethren were admitted Masters.

followed by six names and this,

Brother John Emslie having been Recommended as a worthy and good Mason he was passed Master at the same time.

It appears that two of the six first mentioned brethren had been elected as Wardens of the lodge at a meeting on the 26th of the same month. There having been three meetings apparently between the 26th and the 29th, inclusive. It seems also that they were installed after being "admitted." But it may be better to quote what Hughan says in full, seeing we have not been able to refer to the original:

Two of the six who were thus made "Masters" or Master Masons, viz., Nelthorpe and Aynsworth, had been elected as Wardens at the previous Lodge held on the 26th of the same' month, and were so invested immediately after their becoming Masters, but certainly not because thereof, the third degree not being a qualification for office at that period [36].

The last statement refers to the first Book of Constitutions of 1723, where almost incidentally it is said

The most expert of the Fellow-Craftsmen shall be chosen or appointed the Master, or Overseer of the Lord's work, which is adapted without very great change from the phraseology of the old MS. Charges or Constitutions [³⁷].

As Hughan held that our three degrees were in existence in 1723, that is that the present F.C. and M.M. had been invented and super-posed upon the original simple initiation, he very naturally interpreted the reference to the "Master's Lodge" in the minute of Mar. 31, 1729, as indicating the working of a "third" degree at that date, or rather, of the third

³⁶ Ibid p. 135.

^{37 &}quot;And that ... they should ordain the wisest of them to be Master of the Lord's work;" which, with variations, appears in the "charges" that, according to the Legend of the Craft, were delivered by Euclid in Egypt.

degree, as is indicated by the use of conjunction "or" between "Masters" and "Master Masons" in the quotation above. That this numerical designation is no more than his interpretation of these minutes is definitely indicated a little further on, where he says, in parenthesis,

The next entry respecting the third degree (though not so called) is dated, etc.

There seems to be nothing of special importance in the remaining quotations from the records of this lodge. The entry of April 14, 1731, uses the phrase "passed" instead of "admitted":

Bro. Roul and Bro. Shipton having a desire to be passed Masters, the Master's Lodge was formed and they were passed accordingly.

The new term is used in the other citations, but we cannot say if the older word was disused completely after the above date.

Two quotations from old by-laws are also given which are important, taken in conjunction. Lodge No. 71, meeting at the Barbican, constituted in January, 1730. required each new member

To pay two Pounds seven shillings at his Making, and received Double Cloathing. Also when this Lodge shall think Convenient to confer the Superior Degree of Masonry upon him, he shall pay five Shillings more.

The term "superior" being comparative seems to imply two grades only. Hughan does not discuss this at all, nor yet the following from the by-laws of Lodge No. 83 meeting at the Three Tuns constituted in December, 1731,

... for making the sum of Three Pounds three Shillings, And for their admittance the sum of five Shillings, and every Brother who shall pass the Degrees of F. C. and M. shall pay the further sum of seven shillings and sixpence.

Both these Codes were framed in 1732, so on the face of it one lodge worked two degrees and the other three. The notable point is not that No. 83 practiced our present system, for we know from Prichard's work that three degrees were in existence in 1730, but that there was still a lodge in London that apparently provided only for two. Possibly the clause was copied without alteration from some earlier set of by-laws. But then again, it may equally have represented the actual usage of the lodge.

A brief reference is also made to the records of other old lodges which

... illustrate the working of both the F.C. and M.M. Degrees; as those of the old Lodge at Bath (now No. 41) from 1733; whilst others, similar to a still older lodge at Lincoln, arrange for the Master Mason's Degree being worked (By-laws, A.D. 1732, and Records 1734, etc.), but do not provide for the Fellow Craft's ceremony. Doubtless the latter was known to and practiced in the Lodges, whose Secretaries are uncommunicative on the point, as in the others, whose Scribes inform us of all three being worked. It is probable that the term "making" often included the First two Ceremonies; the third being left to convenient opportunities when the Master's Lodge was convened, or in many instances never communicated at all, the brethren being content as Fellow Craft Freemasons.

We have quoted this at length because it seems a curious argument from one who so greatly objected to inferences and suppositions when made by others, and who so constantly exhorted them to keep strictly to the evidence. "Doubtless" the "Fellow Craft's ceremony" was "known to and practiced" though no mention was made of it. "It is probable" that the first degree and the second (that "doubtless" was worked) were often included in the term making. But none of this is here on record.

The curious minutes of the Philo-Musicae et Archtecturae Societas were also quoted. This Society was an early instance of an "appendant" organization, having been inaugurated in February, 1725. It required its members to be Masons, and considered it had the power to form a lodge to initiate those who wished to become members who had not the necessary Masonic qualification. On the old theory it would seem that its members had this "inherent right," but the Grand Lodge naturally did not like it. These minutes on their face seem to refer to our present three degrees, and Hughan took this view of them, but as this point will have to be mentioned later it may be passed over here.

The question also of the interpretation of the references in the first and second editions of the Book of Constitutions was also discussed, but this also may be more conveniently treated when we come to the views of R.F. Gould. We may just quote the following from the close of Hughan's paper:

As respects the "Book of Constitutions," I consider the regulations of 1723 and the alteration agreed to in 1725, concerning the "Making of Masters," are alone sufficient to prove that the three degrees were known to the English Craft of that period, the uniform silence as to the trio of an earlier date, suggesting that the Ceremonies were arranged subsequent to the inauguration of the premier Grand Lodge.

Hughan expressed his views elsewhere than in the discussions of Quatuor Coronati Lodge; in fact they were fully crystallized long before the lodge was founded. A great many volumes of old periodicals have been gone through without much result so far as discovering any further argument for his views. In 1873 he replied at length in the London Masonic Magazine [38] to a review of Lyon's History of the Old Lodge of Edinburgh by the Rev. A.F.A. Woodford, in which he argued for the antiquity of three degrees. In his reply to this review Hughan rather takes, as he undoubtedly had the right to do, the position of an expert giving his dogmatic conclusions from prolonged study of the evidence. He says that nowhere is there any record from the sixteenth century "to the first half of the second decade of the eighteenth" of any assembly of Masons working ceremonies or communicating "secrets" from which any portion of the fraternity was excluded, or denied participation. He admits the existence of three grades or ranks, those spoken of in the Old Charges as Masters, who had men working for or under them, Fellows and Apprentices, but says that

... so far as the records throw light on the customs of our early brethren the apprentices were as welcome at the election and reception of masters as the latter were required to participate in the initiation of the former.

He might have put it more strongly and said that not only were apprentices welcome, but that their presence was required by the Shaw Statutes, as we have already seen. He goes on

³⁸ Masonic Magazine (London 1873-74), Vol. i, p. 108

to say:

We are quite willing to grant for the sake of argument that a word may have been whispered in the ear of the Master of the lodge (or of Master Masons) on their introduction or constitution in the lodge, but supposing that such were the case, and we think the position is at least probable, the three degrees are so far from being proved as before, especially as we have never traced any intimation ever so slight of a special ceremony at the "passing" of Fellow Crafts peculiar to that grade, and from which the apprentices were excluded.

And further on he emphasizes this opinion:

We must reiterate our conviction that whatever the ceremonies may have been at the introduction of Fellow Crafts and Master Masons anterior to the last [the eighteenth] century, they were not such as to require the exclusion of apprentices from the lodge meetings ... in other words we can only fairly advocate that to have existed of which we have evidence.

It must be borne in mind that in this earlier expression of his views he is arguing against the existence of three degrees of M.M., F.C., and E.A., while at the same time, it would seem, he believed that three grades existed, that is, that the Master was a grade or rank above that of Fellow, and not merely a Fellow holding an office in a lodge or acting as an employer or supervisor. The last sentence cuts both ways for it might be argued that there is no evidence in these old records (with one or two exceptions) for any initiatory ceremony at all.

In a letter to the Grand Lodge of Ohio [39] a few years later he asserted that

It is quite clear that the evidence submitted by Bro. Lyon proves that Modern Freemasonry was introduced into Scotland by Dr. Desaguliers in 1721. Before, however, the Past Grand Master was permitted to visit the Ancient Lodge of Edinburgh he was examined, and found to be "duly qualified in all points of Masonry," so that whatever differences (or additions) there might have been between Modern and Ancient Freemasonry they were not sufficient to obliterate the original character of the society or prevent visitation.

This is one more indication of how much Lyon's work was built upon. If the foundations fail the superstructure must fall. "Modern" and "Ancient" in this passage of course are to be understood generally, and not in their partisan sense during the schism between the senior and junior Grand Lodges in England.

We may now pass on to other exponents of the single initiation theory. In the discussions in Quatuor Coronati Lodge John Lane and Edward Macbean strongly supported Hughan's position, as did also Murray Lyon in a letter to him, but these brethren adduced no new evidence.

It will be noted that, so far, the discussion has been confined entirely to documentary records, statutes, bylaws and minutes, and early references to the Fraternity. Hughan was not inclined to place much weight on ritual evidence, though in criticizing the opinions of his opponents he referred to it. We now come to the American student, Albert Mackey, who did argue from this point of view. In his Encyclopedia, however, under the heading of

³⁹ Ibid (1867-77), Vol. iv, p. 418.

Degrees [40] the conclusion is based chiefly on the external evidence. He says that "it is now [in 1874] the opinion of the best scholars, that the division" was the work

... of the revivalists of the beginning of the eighteenth century that before that period there was but one degree, or rather one common platform of ritualism; and that the division into Masters, Fellows and Apprentices was simply a division of ranks, there being but one initiation for all.

Then he continues with the startling assertion that

In 1717 the whole body of the Fraternity consisted only of Entered Apprentices, who were recognized by the thirty-nine Regulations, compiled in 1720, as among the law-givers of the Craft, no change in those Regulations being allowed unless first submitted "even to the youngest Apprentice."

We see what he means, of course, but it is very awkwardly, even inconsistently, stated. He then goes on to observe that in Anderson's Constitutions

... the degree of Fellow Craft is introduced as being a necessary qualification for Grand Master, although the word degree is not used.

And he adds that in Regulation xiii

... the orders or degrees of Master and Fellow Craft are recognized in the following words: "Apprentices must be admitted Masters and Fellow Crafts only in the Grand Lodge."

This quotation is not quite correct, and the passage will have to be considered later. But neither the 1723 or 1738 editions have the phrase "in the Grand Lodge" though that is undoubtedly the meaning of the actual words, "admitted ... only here." He then points to the change made in the revised book of 1738 in the fourth article of the Charges which definitely states the progression of the Candidate through "Entered Prentice," or "Free Mason of the lowest degree" through that of Fellow Craft to Master Mason," which does not appear in the earlier version, and from all this he deduces that

The division of the Masonic system into three degrees must have grown up between 1717 and 1730, but in so gradual and imperceptible a manner that we are unable to fix the precise date of the introduction of each degree, a conclusion which seems to have been inspired by Findel.

Now there is reason in the suggestion that the new system was the result of a growth or evolution, seeing that it was propagated with no recorded objections or disputes; but the introduction of two new superposed inventions, as he apparently envisages the process, is neither growth nor evolution, and could hardly have been imperceptible.

⁴⁰ The article will be found unchanged in the Revised edition Vol. i, p. 203.

THE PRINTED CONSTITUTIONS

A brief reference is made to the Grand Mystery first published in 1724 (though he says 1725) as being "the earliest ritual extant" and as making no reference to degrees. Actually another "ritual," the Mason's Examination, was published in 1723, and there was yet another, earlier still, of which no copy remains, but evidently he had not then heard of these, nor perhaps later we may presume, as he does not mention them in the fuller discussion embodied in Chapter xxxii of his History. But before considering this it may be as well to dispose of the arguments based on references in the first edition of Anderson's Constitutions and the changes made fifteen years later in the second. Mackey of course was not the first to point out their significance but he may have seen it independently. In the first book we are told the Apprentice is to look forward to being made a Fellow Craft, and then perhaps to being elected Warden or Master; the Fellow Craft thus appearing to be eligible to any office in the Craft. The Tyler of Grand Lodge was to be a Fellow Craft, the Committee to examine visitors at the annual feast were to be Fellow Crafts, as also the Treasurer and Secretary of Grand Lodge. Naturally these officers would have to be of the highest degree known in the lodge. In constituting a new lodge the Master and Wardens were "among the Fellow Crafts" before installation, and finally the ultimate secrets of Masonry were only to be obtained by the "key of a Fellow Craft." In the second book all these passages have been systematically amended to read "Master Mason" instead of Fellow Craft. These were not the only changes it may be mentioned. In the first edition there was a distinct tendency to call the annual gathering, or assembly and feast, a General Lodge, and to restrict the term Grand Lodge to the quarterly meetings of the Masters and Wardens of particular lodges. In the revised book the term General Lodge has been everywhere deleted and Grand Lodge substituted, doubtless to be in accord with the disuse of the other and earlier term among members of the Craft.

The fourth charge in the first edition [41] has a long and rather obscure sentence:

Only Candidates may know that no Master should take an Apprentice, unless he has sufficient Imployment for him, and unless he be a perfect Youth, having no Maim or Defect in his Body, that may render him uncapable of learning the Art, of serving his Master's Lord, and of being made a Brother, and then a Fellow Craft in due time, even after he has served such a Term of Years as the Custom of the country directs.

This is a cumbersome adaptation of the language of the Old Charges, and leaving out the intermediate clauses it states negatively, that:

No Master should take an apprentice ... unless he [have no defect that would render him] uncapable ... of being made a Brother, and then a Fellow Craft in due time.

In the second edition this passage has been much changed, and the clause of special interest in the present connection runs as follows:

⁴¹ The citations from the 1723 Book of Constitutions have been taken from the reproduction in Vol. i of Kennings, Masonic Archaeological Library, edited by the Rev. A.F.A. Woodford; and for those from the New Book of 1738, the reprint in Quatuor Coronatorum Antigrapha, Vol. vii, edited by W. J. Hughan has been employed.

...that, when of Age, and Expert, he [the apprentice] may become an Enter'd Prentice, or a Free Mason of the lowest degree, and upon his due improvements a Fellow-Craft and a Master-Mason, capable to undertake a Lord's work.

The fiction of operative usage is carefully retained, but the highest grade now appears to be Master Mason, although the meaning is not absolutely unequivocal, as Master Mason might still be taken to mean Master of a lodge. But the next paragraph bars this interpretation. for it runs:

The WARDENS are chosen from among the Master-Masons, and no Brother can be a Master of a Lodge till he has acted as Warden somewhere, except in extraordinary Cases.

Regulation xiii deals with the Quarterly Communications, and states that

... all matters that concern the Fraternity in general, or particular Lodges or single Brethren, are quietly, sedately, and maturely to be discoursed of and transacted: Apprentices must be admitted Masters and Fellow-Craft only here, unless by a dispensation. Here also all Differences, that cannot be made up and accommodated privately ... are to be ... decided:

and a right of appeal to the Annual Grand Lodge is provided for.

Mackey argues that the clause after the colon, about Apprentices being admitted Masters and Fellow Craft, is an interpolation. It certainly does seem to be an after thought, but it does not follow that we must conclude, as he would have us, that it was inserted after the manuscript had been submitted to the Grand Lodge for approval. Mackey supposes it to have been done surreptitiously by Anderson, at the instance of Dr. Desaguliers, to pave the way for the introduction of his newly invented degrees, and possibly connived at by some other members of the Grand Lodge. But the approbation and license to print give the impression that the manuscript was very fully considered; and in the second edition Anderson states, in the chronicle of events after 1717, that at the meeting of the Grand Lodge on March 7, 1722,

The said Committee of 14 reported that they had perused Brother Anderson's manuscript, viz., the History, Charges, Regulations and Master's Song, and after some Amendments had approved of it.

The awkward clause may quite well be an interpolation, as Mackey suggested, and yet one made regularly and in order by this Committee, or else in Grand Lodge. There is no reason to doubt this statement of Anderson's, and amendments to motions and by-laws are frequently interpolations that are quite as awkward as this. We shall have to return to the consideration of this clause again, so here we will only note that in the second edition it was repealed and made to read, according to Anderson,

The Master of a Lodge, with his Wardens and a competent Number of the Lodge assembled in due form, can make Masters and Fellows at discretion.

But he also made a change in the wording of the "Old Regulation" itself, making it read:

Apprentices must be admitted Fellow Crafts and Masters only here unless by a Dispensation from the Grand Master.

Thus, by reversing the sequence of "Masters" and "Fellow Craft" he has made the original enactment fit the new three degree system.

All this is also "interpretation." Mackey here apparently followed Gould, though it may possibly be that he reached this conclusion independently. It depends on when this part of his work was written, and that seems impossible to determine exactly. At least Gould has priority of publication. This will have to be further discussed when we come to the consideration of the views of the latter authority, when Hughan's comments will also have to be taken up again. Mackey, though at one with him in regarding both the second and third degrees as inventions made after 1719 as he insists there was but the one simple admission till that year, yet agrees with Speth and Gould in holding that in 1723 a two degree system was in existence. The possible permutations are confusing to say the least!

We may now go back and consider Mackey's arguments for the hypothesis of an original single ceremony of admission with one set of esoteric secrets. He quoted the thirteenth article of the Regius MS. (under the title of the Halliwell MS.) which deals with the Master's duty to instruct his apprentice. Mackey interprets the last two lines

That he the crafte abelyche may conne Whersever he go undur the sonne to refer to means of recognition, and says that it implies that

He was to be invested with the modes of recognition common to all, whereby a mutual intercourse might be had. It was not that he was to know just enough to prove himself to be an apprentice, but he was to have such knowledge as would enable him to recognize in a stranger a Fellow-Craft or Master - in other words, he was to have all they had in the way of recognition.

Old English is not very easy to understand. These verses might be paraphrased;

That he the craft ably may know Wherever he may go under the sun.

Mackey has taken "craft" to mean "the Craft" in our modern sense of the word, the members of the Fraternity at large. Of course it means the craft or art of operative masonry. But in any case the argument is a curious one. What kind of secrets would enable an Apprentice to recognize a Master as such that would not make it possible for him to pass himself off as one?

In his next quotation he is on more solid ground. This is the "third point," and gives a metrical version of a rule that appears in all the Old Charges, that the Mason is

...to hele the counsel of his fellows in lodge and in chamber and wherever Masons meet, as the Cooke MS. has it; or as it is said in the William Watson MS.

That every Mason keep true councell both of Lodge & Chamber all other Councells that ought to be kept by way of Masonrie.

But there is nothing that is necessarily to be taken as esoteric about these "councells," or the "secrets" of his Master or Dame, that in later versions of the MS. Constitutions the Apprentice is charged to keep. Aside from ritual tradition these could be best and most naturally interpreted as referring only to trade and business secrets, and domestic privacies.

PART 4

IN dealing with the primitive esotericism of the Craft, and the forms and ceremonies, if any, inherited by the new Grand Lodge organizations in the British Isles, from the old Operative system, Murray Lyon, as we have seen, practically ignored ritual evidence. In fact from his History alone we should hardly even suspect that there was any. Hughan did touch upon it slightly, but only because those he opposed had to some extent used it in support of their contentions. He expressed his opinion that either it was spurious, or else too late in date to have any bearing upon the question at issue. In the revised edition of his valuable work, The Origin of the English Rite [42] expresses himself to this effect in several places. Nevertheless, both he and Lyon did accept, apparently in an uncriticized way, so much of the ritual tradition - or tradition of ritual - that is inherent in Freemasonry as to lead them to understand the bare and laconic pre-Grand Lodge records in the sense that there was something of a secret and ceremonial character practiced in the lodges, although, as we have pointed out, this is hardly a necessary conclusion from the evidence of these records by themselves.

In his revision, Hughan, on page 23, admits that the discovery of the Chetwode Crawley MS. Catechism head some weight in favor of a primitive two degree theory, more especially as it is in part corroborated by the cryptic note in the minute book of the old lodge at Haughfoot, of date 1702. However, in spite of this concession, his opinion was not really shaken. On page 37 he dismisses the ritual remains as in his opinion worthless, and on page 24 quotes a letter from Murray Lyon, in 1897, as saying he was "more than ever convinced that we are right in our views" on the question of degrees.

Albert Mackey, whose arguments we are now considering, did however go into this aspect of the subject more fully [43]; though, apparently, he was only acquainted with The Grand Mystery of Free-Masons Discovered, of 1724, Prichard's Masonry Dissected, of 1730, and the Sloane MS. No. 3329 of unknown date, but probably between 1700 and 1720. It was thus impossible for him to treat the matter adequately. Two or three of these documents have been discovered since, but the Mason's Examination and the Mason's Confession were well known when he wrote, and it seems curious that he was not familiar with them. As this evidence will have to have its turn later we need only to touch on the salient points of his argument on this score.

He notes first that in the Grand Mystery [44] there is no reference to degrees. This is not true of all these documents, and the Grand Mystery itself actually makes a distinction of class in two questions and answers:

- Q. What is a Mason?
- A. A man, begot of a man, born of a woman, Brother to a king.
- Q. What is a Fellow? A.

⁴² Hughan, Origin of the English Rite of Freemasonry, published first in 1884. The revised edition appeared in 1909; a third edition, edited by John T. Thorp, was published in 1925.

⁴³ Mackey: History of Freemasonry, Vol. iv, Chap. xxxii, p. 926. (In the Revised Edition it is Chap. 76, Vol. iii, p. 977.) The discussion is carried on in the succeeding chapters.

⁴⁴ This Catechism is reproduced in the Appendix to Gould's History of Freemasonry. In the Yorston Edition, this is to be found in Vol. iv, p. 280. The Mason's Examination is also given.

A Companion of a Prince.

This is very slight by itself, and for its full significance needs to be compared with parallel passages in other versions. But Mackey goes on to quote the Sloane MS. 3329 [45], in regard to the formation of the lodge, where it is said:

What is a just and perfect or just and lawful lodge?

A just and perfect lodge is two Interprintices, two fellow craftes and two Mast'rs...

so that by his own showing the (apparent) silence of the one is balanced by the definite statement of the other, though he, of course, interprets the last quotation as referring to status only, and not to degrees. He takes these documents as representing old operative ritual, and as he sees nothing in the Catechism that definitely refers to higher degrees and more restricted secrets, he infers that they did not exist. The argument is good so far as it goes. The Sloane MS. has, however, some additional matter in which a "gripe for fellow crafts" and a "master's gripe" are spoken of. In this passage he certainly has put his finger on a real difficulty for the proponents of the two degree hypothesis, although on its face it seems to support the older and traditional belief in the antiquity of the present system rather than a single initiation. The difficulty from the former point of view will have to be discussed later. Mackey seeks to show, first, that the difference between these two "gripes" is trifling, and second, presumably along the lines of his interpretation of "the threttene artycul" of the Regius MS., that they "distinguished" the higher grades but yet were known to all Masons, including the apprentices, just "as the number of stripes on the arm distinguish the grades of non- commissioned officers in the army."

In the MS. there are two variant forms of "their master's gripe" described, and the second is introduced by the words

... but some say the mast'rs grip is the same I last described only, etc.

Now the last described was the one coming immediately before, for the "gripe for fellow craftes" is the one first described. But Mackey misunderstood the passage, and that he did so is concealed in a broken quotation. He cites it thus [46]:

... the close of the passage leaves it uncertain that the "gripes" were not identical, or at least with a very minute difference. "Some say," adds the writer [i.e., of the MS.], "the Master's grip is the same" as the Fellow Crafts - "only" - and then he gives the hardly appreciable difference.

But the MS. does not say "the same as the Fellow Crafts," but "same as I last described," and this can only grammatically, and in common sense, refer to what actually had last, that is, just previously, been spoken of; and that in fact was the Master's, not the Fellow's, grip. In other words, the MS. describes a Fellow's "gripe" and two variant forms of that of the

⁴⁵ This was discovered by J. G. Findel in the Sloane collection of MSS. in the British Museum. It was published by the Rev. A.F.A. Woodford, and according to Mackey, by W. J. Hughan in the Voice of Freemasonry, October, 1872, in the National Freemason for April, 1873. It was reproduced again in the Montana Mason for October, 1921. The Catechism contained in the MS. is given in Finders History of Freemasonry, App. C. Mackey apparently intended to publish it also, judging by a statement in Chap. xxxii, p. 927, but the passage referred to in the note merely tells us where it was to be found. Possibly his publishers decided to leave it out. We have used a transcript made from the original MS.

⁴⁶ Mackey: op. cit., p. 969.

Master's, which have a slight, but - in spite of Mackey - a quite appreciable difference between them.

Another argument is drawn from this MS., and here again it seems Mackey fell into error, possibly through having an inaccurate copy before him. He says:

The manuscript speaks of two words, "the Mast'r Word" and "the Mason word." The latter is said to have been given in a certain form, which is described. It is possible that the former may have been communicated to Masters as a privilege attached to their rank, while the latter was communicated to the whole Craft. In a later ritual [this refers to the Grand Mystery] it has been seen there were two words, "the Jerusalem Word" and "the universal word," but both were known to the whole Fraternity.

Had he written: "The first is said to have been given in a certain form ... It is possible that it may have been communicated to Masters," and so on, the passage would make sense. In the MS. there is at the very end an oath, so headed, which begins:

The Mason word and everything therein contained you shall keep secret ...

Immediately before this are two paragraphs describing formal salutations, the second of which begins:

Another they have called the mast'r word ...

This word is given, and it seems to be another form of the word ""Maughbin" which appears in several other of the old catechisms. What the "Mason word" was is not said, it may have been another term for the "Mast'r word," or we may perhaps interpret it, as Lyon seemed willing to do (though rather reluctantly, it must be said), as a phrase implying all the esoteric secrets and mysteries of Masonry. The two words spoken of in the Grand Mystery as the Jerusalem word and the Universal word respectively are Giblin and Boaz, but in the Essex MS. [47], which is an independent variant form of the same catechism, they are given as Giblin and Maughbin. This fact, which of course was unknown to Mackey, really cuts the ground from under his argument in this place, whatever it may be worth on its own premises.

He bases a further argument on this oath, and says it

... supplies itself the strongest proof that during the period in which it formed part of the ritual, that ritual must have been one common to all classes; in other words, there could have been but one degree, because there was but one obligation of secrecy imposed, and the Secrets, whatever they were, must have been known to all Freemasons, to the Apprentices as well as to the Master [48].

This, we fear, rather in the nature of special pleading. The Grand Mystery, and the other two documents which are variant forms of it [49], all give a "Freemason's Oath," which has nothing about secrecy at all. It runs

You must serve God ... be a true liege man to the King and help and assist any Brother so far as your ability will allow. By the contents of the Sacred Writ, etc.

⁴⁷ In the British Museum. It has never been published.

⁴⁸ Mackey: op. cit., p. 971.

⁴⁹ The Essex MS. already mentioned, and the Institution MS., which was published in facsimile by Bro. A. F. Calvert, in the Transactions of the Authors' Lodge, No. 3456, in 1919.

But immediately, or closely following it, in all three documents is the "Freemason's Health," in which occurs the phrase:

... to every faithful Brother that keeps his Oath of Secrecy.

The obvious inference is that the oath actually given was not the only one. Mackey, as also others, has argued as if these stray memoranda, for that seems to be their character in every case but that of Prichard's exposure, were complete rituals. We cannot quite hold Mackey fully excused, as he was acquainted with the contents of the early French publications, such as L'Ordre de Franc-Macons Trahi, and here we find three degrees fully fledged while only one form of oath is given.

THE THEORY OF DELIBERATE INVENTION

Mackey's theory of the origin of the two higher degrees of Fellow Craft and Master Mason is very simple, and in such a complex situation its very simplicity lays it open to doubt. He lays it all to deliberate and conscious invention.

It is now [about the year 1880] very generally admitted that the arrangement of Freemasonry into the present system of three degrees was the work of Dr. Desaguliers, assisted by Anderson, Payne and perhaps some other collaborators. The perfecting of the system was of very slow growth. At first there was but one degree, which had been derived from the Operative Masons of preceding centuries. This was the degree practised in 1717, when the so-called "Revival" took place. It was no doubt improved by Desaguliers, who was Grand Master in 1719, and who probably about that time began his ritualistic experiments. The fact that Payne, in 1718 "desired any brethren to bring to Grand Lodge any old writings concerning Masons and Masonry in order to show the usages of ancient times," exhibits a disposition and preparation for improvement. [50]

Which, interrupting, we may agree seems a very justifiable conclusion, but surely not "improvement" along the lines of "innovation" and "pure invention." He continues:

The First and Second Degrees had been modelled out of the one primitive degree about the year 1719. The "Charges" compiled in 1720 by Grand Master Payne recognize the Fellow Craft as the leading degree and the one from which the officers of lodges and of the Grand Lodge were to be selected.

This of course assumes that the Regulations as printed in 1723 were exactly the same as those Payne compiled and submitted for the approval of Grand Lodge on St. John Baptist's Day, 1720, at Stationers Hall, when the Duke of Montagu was installed as Grand Master. This is not certain, for there is no way of proving it; and as a matter of fact Anderson definitely states that they had been edited and "digested" into a "new method" by him. Indeed, Mackey himself, as we have seen, suggested an alleged interpolation in Regulation xiii. He goes on:

Up to this time [1723] we find no reference to the Third degree. "The particular" lodges conferred only the First Degree. Admission or initiation into the Second Degree was done in the Grand Lodge. This was owing to the fact that Desaguliers and the inventors of the new degree were unwilling to place it out of their immediate control, lest improper persons might be admitted or the ceremonies be imperfectly performed.

Here we may observe that there is nothing whatever to show that this requirement was ever anything but a dead letter. The existing minutes of the Grand Lodge [51] begin June 24, 1723, and this particular regulation was repealed at the quarterly communication held Nov. 27, 1725 - the proceedings of eight meetings being recorded previously; in none; of them is there the slightest reference to any passing of Fellow Crafts. From this it would seem, that either it had never been carried out and the lodges had made their own members Fellow Crafts, or else that between June, 1723, and March, 1722 (or perhaps June, 1721, if this

⁵⁰ Mackey: op. cit. p. 991.

⁵¹ These were published in the Reprints of Quatuor Coronati Lodge in 1913, Q.C.A., Vol. x. The minute referred to is on p. 64.

clause appeared in the original Regulation as submitted by Payne), the Grand Lodge worked overtime and made sufficient Fellow Crafts to qualify all the Masters and Wardens of the many new lodges that were being instituted. The only other possibility is to suppose that the qualification had been disregarded, and that there were no Fellow Crafts outside the little group surrounding Desaguliers and Payne and those active in the supposed plan to transform Masonry into a new and purely speculative system. Really it would seem this last supposition would fit Mackey's theory of conscious and deliberate innovation the best.

To go on with his account of the steps taken by the inventors of the new degrees in carrying out their alleged plans:

After the "Revival," in 1717 (I use the term under protest), Desaguliers had divided the one degree which had been common to the three classes into two, making the degrees of Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft. It is not to be supposed that this was a mere division of the esoteric instruction into two parts ... we may believe that taking the primitive degree of the Operatives as a foundation there was built upon it an enlarged Superstructure of ceremonies and lectures. The Catechism of the degree was probably changed and improved, and the "Mason Word" as the Operatives had called it, was transferred to the Second Degree, to be afterwards again transferred to the Third Degree.

After this, Desaguliers continued to exercise his inventive genius and consummated the series of degrees by adding one to be appropriated to the highest class, or that of the Masters. But not having thoroughly perfected the ritual of the degree until after the time of publication of the Book of Constitutions, it was probably not disseminated among the Craft until the year 1723.

Here Mackey is in agreement with Hughan, who thought that the Mason's Examination, which appeared in the Flying Post the same year, proved that the "Master's Part" was then in existence as well as the Fellow Craft. This, too, will have to have consideration later.

Mackey also discussed [52] the account given by Laurence Dermott, in the second edition of Ahiman Rezon, of the origin of the "Modern" (i.e., the senior) Grand Lodge, which he thinks may reflect some recollection of the invention of the degree of Master Mason, and, indeed, it is not improbable that it is founded on some actual report, at first or second hand, that a degree was added to the old system. 1764 was not too long after 1720 to be bridged by the life of an individual as has already been pointed out, and Dermott had been a Mason a good many years before he wrote the words quoted.

We may add that Mackey also adopted the "mutilation" theory of the origin of the Royal Arch [53], which Dr. Oliver had supported in later life; so that on his showing, the "Mason Word" was progressively transferred from degree to degree until it finally found a resting place in that "Supreme Order."

⁵² Mackey: op. cit., p. 998.

⁵³ Ibid., p, 1108 and Vol. v, p. 1238.

THE OPINION OF ALBERT PIKE

Albert Pike was quoted by Hughan as among those authorities who agreed with him, but we have been able to find no new argument advanced in his published works. Indeed he seems to have depended largely, if not entirely, on the conclusions reached by Murray Lyon, and Hughan himself [54]. We may, therefore, dismiss him without further consideration in the present connection. But it is noteworthy, and rather curious, to see how the proponents of the single initiation theory have depended on the conclusions reached by Lyon, based on his consideration of the ancient Scottish records. His conclusions were inferences, but these brethren were all more than a little inclined to object to the inferences of others who held different views, not as illogically drawn, but simply as being inferences.

⁵⁴ Hughan (A.Q.C., Vol. x, p. 131) cites Pike's Origines. In this work Pike offers as his chief argument the authority of Hughan's own conclusions.

THE TWO DEGREE THEORY

We have now examined the case for the existence only of a single admission ceremony practiced by Masons before the Grand Lodge era [55]. As against the traditional view that three degrees existed from time immemorial it carries very great weight. So much so that it is probable that any critical mind would accept it. However, it is not the only alternative, and we now come to the consideration of the arguments of G. W. Speth, who may be regarded as the protagonist of the so-called "Two Degree" theory, though R. F. Gould became a very prominent supporter of it too. It would appear, though, that Speth was first in the field. He broached it in various lectures to Masonic audiences (so we gather from scattered allusions) and in articles in various periodicals, among them the old Keystone of Philadelphia. We have not been able to trace all these scattered articles and references, but it fortunately does not seem necessary for our purpose, as both Hughan and Speth presented their respective cases before the Quatuor Coronati Lodge and, so far as can be judged, resumed every argument in support of their respective views that seemed to them to be of weight. Speth regarded his paper, which was read the year after Hughan's, as a reply thereto. This we will now consider.

He begins by a caveat [⁵⁶]: He says that Hughan's strongest argument was the lack of direct evidence for more than one degree, and this he admits is the chief difficulty he has to face. His task is to marshall the indirect evidence which Hughan and Lyon were inclined to rule out as inadmissible. On this question of evidence something will have to be said in the sequel so it may be passed over here, but Speth might almost have said that there was no direct unequivocal evidence (other than ritual and tradition) for any "degree." It really seems curious that no one engaged in the discussion saw this. Tradition apparently blinded them.

He then divides the question by periods, which he classes as the purely Operative, the mainly Operative, the mainly Speculative and the purely Speculative, though he makes it clear that there are no sharp clearly defined boundaries between them. The purely Operative period is in fact quite hypothetical, or at least pre-historic in the strict sense, because as far back as we have records we find non-Operative members in the Fraternity. But we must presumably postulate such a period; and in it, some time before the fifteenth century let us say, the Old Charges were formulated and introduced, with a legendary account of the invention and progress of Geometry and Masonry.

The first argument is that something was necessary to distinguish the fellow in order to prevent an apprentice running away and passing himself off as a fully qualified craftsman. In the discussion following the paper Hughan was unable to see why this would be more necessary among Masons than in any other Craft. Lane seemed inclined to think it doubtful that the apprentice received any secret mode of recognition. And if the one degree theory is to be adopted it would really seem more feasible to suppose the initiation came at the end of the apprenticeship rather than at the beginning. But as Speth pointed out in reply boys

⁵⁵ German Masonic students, as Kloss and Findel took the same view. Findel indeed was the first to advance it. So far as we have been able to consult their work, no further arguments appear than those already discussed. The chief one, on which all the others depend, being that elaborated by Murray Lyon that Apprentices were present in the lodge when Fellows were admitted or received.

⁵⁶ A.Q.C., Vol. xi, p. 47, et seq.

became men much earlier in life in those days. There are cases of boys of sixteen leading armies in the field, while Hughan's objection was met by pointing out the peculiar conditions of the Craft, that Masons were migratory, and, outside the larger towns, free to work anywhere.

Speth then made the point that our present nomenclature is. from the operative point of view, incorrect, as the apprentice became a Master first, a master of his craft, and thus was eligible to become a Fellow of the Fraternity; and in this Conder [57] agreed with him, stating that this was certainly the case in regard to the London Mason's Company. Speth also asked if it was probable that such an important occasion in the Craftsman's life as the end of his servitude as an Apprentice was likely to pass "without some ceremony to mark the occasion." Hughan (who answered every argument adduced categorically) asked why more so in the Mason's craft than any other? And if there was a ceremony, why it should be esoteric? In respect to the first question it might be said that there was something in the nature of a ceremony in other crafts. There would be the formality of release, and the young craftsman, even to our own day, had to stand treat. In regard to the second it can only be countered, why any secret ceremony at all? If the implied argument is good it covers the initiation as well.

The next point rests on the passages in the Old Charges that have already come before us in discussing Mackey's views. It is the phrase "hall and bower" in the Regius MS. and "lodge and chamber" in the others. Now to

... kepe all the counsells of yo'r fellowes truely, be yt in Lodge or chamber

as the Grand Lodge Roll No. 1 has it, might possibly refer to two sets of secrets; but, as we noted before, there is nothing on the face of it to lead us to think so; one would naturally take them to refer to trade and personal matters. But the curious thing is that several of the Old Catechisms make the Hall and Kitchen a mark of distinction between the Fellow and the Apprentice. In the Mystery of Free Masons [58], published in 1730 the question

Did you ever dine in the Hall?

is asked to distinguish a "Brother Mason" from an "Enter'd Apprentice" who had only been in the kitchen. By itself then this argument carries little weight, but yet Speth's interpretation is not to be brushed aside as requiring no consideration at all.

⁵⁷ A.Q.C., Vol. xi, p. 72, also Hole Crafte, p. 58, and A.Q.C., Vol. ix, p. 35, et seq.

⁵⁸ This is not to be confused with the Grand Mystery; the Catechism given is a variant of that in the Examination.

THE COOKS AND REGIUS MSS.

The next argument advanced is drawn from two passages in the Cooke MS. This was reproduced in Quatuor Coronotorum Antigrapha with a commentary by Bro. Speth himself. In this he advances reasons for holding that this MS. consists of a copy of the oldest form of the Charges now existing, prefaced by an extended legend or history of the Craft, and that though the Regius MS. is older than the Cooke yet the latter in part is a copy of the same code that the author of the Masonic poem had before him and which he versified, and further that it is probably a more primitive version still, as the Regius has a number of additions which seem to be amendments to the original.

The two passages that Speth thought significant in the present connection are as follows, both being from the part of the document that is supposedly the copy of an older code. It has briefly announced the spread of Masonry "from londe to londe and fro Kyngdome to Kyngdome" and says that in the time of "kynge adhelstone" the craft was reorganized in England on account of "grete defaute" found among Masons, and it was consequently ordained that "fro provynce to provynce and fro contre to contre," that is presumably from county to county, "congregacions scholde be made," by masters of "alle maisters Masons and felous in the forsayde art," which in modern English would be "all master masons and fellows of the aforesaid art or craft," and then, that at such congregations

... they that be made masters schold be examned of the articuls after writen, & be ransakyd whether thei be abulle and schulde receyue here charge that they schulde welle and trewly dispende the goodys of here lordis.

Which means that they who are "to be made masters" are to be examined as to their knowledge of the law of the craft and their technical skill, and then "to receive their charge" that they will honestly conserve the interests of their employers. After this follow the "articuls," of which there are nine, and these again are followed by nine "poynts." The latter concern the private relations of Masons to each other, while the articles seem to refer to those with their employers. In other words the articles were regulations that had probably the force of civil law, while the points were by-laws governing the internal economy of the Craft. These having been recited, the narrative returns to the conduct of the assembly with the words:

Whan the master and the felowes be for warned ben y come to suche congregaiones ...

And it goes on to say that, if required, the sheriff or mayor shall be an assessor or

... felow and sociat to the master of the congregacion,

to help him keep order and maintain the right of the realm. And then comes, apparently, the first order of business:

At the fyrst begynnynge new men that neuer were chargyd bifore beth charged in this manere ...

Now in his commentary [59] Speth says of this

⁵⁹ Q.C.A., Vol. ii. The commentary has no page numbers. The passage quoted is on the next to the last one.

The first business was to charge men that had never been charged before. It is impossible to read this otherwise than that apprentices who had served their time were here declared free of the craft, master workmen, admitted into the fellowship.

In other words that it was a restatement, in the form of an Order of Business, or Agenda, for the Assembly, of what had previously been said in the historical account of the organization of the Craft in England. Or that the charging of "new men" was the same thing as the "receiving their charge of those that were to be made masters." This was in 1890, eight years before the paper we are considering was written. In the interval Speth seems to have changed his mind, for he now contrasts these two passages and says of the latter:

"New men that never were charged before" must be the newly entered apprentices, and goes on to say that in later versions of the Constitutions it seems to be indicated that this obligation was

... administered at the lodge at, or shortly after, their entry, pointing possibly to the gradual obsolescence of the assembly.

No one seems to have noticed this reversal of opinion except Upton. However, Lane said that the Charges generally, that is the written documents, were addressed to "Every man that is a Mason," and were either given to Apprentices or Fellows. If to the former why was there a separate set of "Apprentice Charges?" If to Fellows, the phrase "new men" seems inapplicable. To this, it must be observed, that the special Apprentice Charges do not appear till late, and thus the point raised hardly affects any argument concerning the early period, the "purely Operative," represented by the Cooke MS. Also it might be contended that "new men" were those who had learned the trade outside the Fraternity, and wished to join, or were being forced to join it as in our own times men have been forced to join trade unions. This would of course imply that the original of this MS. dated back to a time when the Craft organization was being introduced into England, or into parts of England, where it had not existed before.

Lane also said that there was no indication in the Cooke MS. of anything esoteric about this charging of "new men" or making of masters, which is quite true. There is no hint anywhere of anything secret, excepting the third point

... that he can hele the councelle of his felows in logge and in chambere and in every place ther as Masons beth,

though instead of this he quoted the equivalent passage from the Carson MS.

to hele ... the counsel of his fellows in Lodge and in Chamber and all other Counsels that ought to be kept by way of Masonry

or as it appears in other places "Masonhood" or "Brotherhood."

In this Lane appears to be justified; to see anything beyond the proper reserve and reticence concerning trade secrets, and the business and personal affairs of the associates of the individual Mason, his fellow workmen and employers, is an inference. But if this, being only an inference, is to be held as conclusive against the existence of something esoteric in the "making" and "charging" of Masters it is equally conclusive against the existence of anything esoteric at all at the time when the Charges were formulated.

PART 5

WE have now to consider the later periods into which Bro. G. W. Speth divided his consideration of the vexed problem of the origin of Masonic degrees. [60] The first, as we have seen, was the "purely Operative" period, and the only evidence concerning it is almost entirely confined to the scanty indications to be discovered in the old MS. Constitutions, from the Regius and Cooke onwards. These scattered fragments are in themselves so obscure that it is practically impossible to construct any system at all out of them except upon some hypothesis based upon other considerations outside of and apart from them. Thus it came about that all the contestants could find support for their own theories in these documents in spite of the fact that these theories were mutually contradictory.

The next two of Speth's four periods are the "Mainly Operative" and the "mainly Speculative." It might almost have been better to have treated them as one under the head of the "Transition Period," though this term has been more usually applied to the few years between 1717 and 1730. It would, however, be very advantageous to enlarge its scope, for this limitation is a very narrow and almost artificial one. Presumably adopted, in the first place, before it was realized that the process of evolution from the Operative to the Speculative status of the Craft began long before 1717, perhaps a century or more, and continued long after 1730. Indeed one might bring the later limit of transition down to 1813, when, with the Union of the Ancient and Modern Grand Lodges, the last traces of Christian doctrine were eliminated from the rituals of English Masonry, though a few are still left in those used in America.

As a matter of fact Speth has very little to say about his "mainly Operative" period, even less than for the "purely Operative." He remarks that

... the accession of gentlemen to the membership must have been gradually on the increase and that it is scarcely conceivable that the operatives, whose object in admitting these gentlemen was doubtless to insure their Patronage and good will, should have failed to admit them at once to the full membership, i.e., fellowship. We cannot suppose for one moment that a seven years' apprenticeship was demanded of them.

And then he goes on to add:

Possibly they were entered at one lodge meeting and passed to the fellowship at the very next annual head-meeting day.

By which he means, presumably, not the meeting of the lodge in which they were entered, but the next general Assembly, or Congregation, as the Cooke MS. terms it. He then argues that;

If so, in course of time the procedure would be simplified, especially if the annual assemblies were being neglected, and the two degrees would be conferred consecutively at the same meeting.

In other words, the lodges began to exercise the functions of the Assembly, in respect at least to making Masters, or in other words, "Passing" or "admitting" Fellows. Speth

60 A.Q.C., Vol. xi, p. 41, et seq.

however insists that the designation of these honorary, or gentlemen, members would be Fellows, not Masters, because they would be in no sense masters of the craft, although they were Fellows of the society. Yet we find a number of instances in 17th century lodge records in Scotland where such gentleman Masons are distinctly spoken of as masters as well as "fellows of craft," though undoubtedly the latter seems to have been the more usual form. Two examples may be cited from the minutes of Mary's Chapel. The first, of date May 20, 1640, it is said that the members of the lodge

... doeth admit amoght them the right honerabell Alexander Hamiltone, generall of the artillerie of thes kindom, to be felow and Mr. of the forced draft

And on Dec. 27 (St. John's Day) 1667 the Rt. Hon. Sir Patrick Hume was admitted in as fellow of craft (and master) of this lodg. [61]

In fact, if they were honorary members there is no reason why they should not also have been honorary masters. Speth goes on to draw a conclusion from this presumed passing of gentlemen masons to the fellowship at one time; he says:

If we admit these suggestions as plausible, it would be necessary, even at the entering of gentlemen to exclude the apprentices, because the admission to the fellowship was to follow on immediately, and we should thus be able to account for the chief characteristic of the next period of transition, that of the mainly speculative, when only one ceremony is indicated and all mention of apprentices ceases.

This naturally gave an opening to those who took the other side of the question to retort, "If, as you admit, there was only one ceremony at a later period, why suppose two at an earlier one?" But the weakness of his argument is more apparent than real, as there does not seem any necessity for supposing that the apprentices were excluded from their normal share in the proceedings, whatever these were. The later silence in regard to this grade could be very simply accounted for; in lodges of purely non-operative membership there would never be any apprentices, unless as was actually done at Haughfoot and Dunblane, special rules were enacted to forbid the "entering" and "passing" (whatever the terms may have implied) on the same occasion. The first of these two lodges, on Dec. 27, 1707,

... came to a generall resolution that in tyme coming, they would not, except on special considerations, admitt to the Society both of apprentice and fellowcraft, at the same tyme, but that one year at least should intervene betwixt any being admitted apprentice and his being entered fellowcraft. [62]

In most of the old lodges the terms "admit" and "pass" was generally used of making fellows, and "enter" of apprentices, but the Haughfoot minutes seem to have reversed this usage. It may be noted incidentally that this lodge met once a year on St. John's Day in winter, but that any five members (or presumably, more than five) were regularly empowered "to admit and enter such qualified persons as should apply to them."

⁶¹ Lyon, History of the Lodge of Edinburgh, pp. 80 and 81.

⁶² A.Q.C., Vol. xvi, p. 178, also Gould History, Vol. ii, p. 68. It was the regular custom in this lodge for those who were made Masons to be "entered" to the lodge by a "commission" of five members. Apparently any five members might thus act though the "commission" was renewed at each St. John's Day meeting of the lodge. This may be Significant in view of the requirement in the MS. Constitutions that no one is to be made a Mason without five or six or seven Masons present and consenting. The numbers required vary in the different versions.

The Dunblane minute is not perhaps so significant, though it is dated Sept. 1,1716, a year before the four lodges in London had held the momentous assembly from which the Grand Lodge was born.

It is enacted that in tyme coming there be no meassones or others entered and past by the members of this Lodge at one and the same time (except such gentlemen who cannot be present at a second diet.) [63]

But failing such a definite regulation it would come about naturally and inevitably, whether entering and passing implied two secret ceremonies, or one, or none, that if all the members of the lodge were non-operative, and received to fellowship (or full membership) at one time, the apprentice rank would not exist not because it was unknown or disused, but because no one remained an appentice for more than a few minutes. And this would quite naturally account for its not being mentioned.

The next stage of Speth's presentation of his argument can be treated more briefly, though it actually takes a good deal more space; but as it deals with evidence that has already been discussed, it will not be necessary to cover it in detail. The initiation of Elias Ashmole is taken first, and Rylands' proof that the lodge at Warrington was non- operative in character is quoted. Rylands laboriously hunted through wills and parish registers till he was able to show that most of those mentioned as present by Ashmole were landed gentlemen of the neighborhood. The lodge at Chester to which Randle Holme belonged was also nonoperative in the main, though its members were chiefly burgesses of Chester. To some extent the same thing seems to have been true, in the seventeenth century, of the "Accepcon" connected with the Mason's Company at London. The Old Lodge at York was also non-operative, though one instance is recorded of admitting two members gratis because they were working stone masons. And, if we admit its existence, the lodge at Doneraile which initiated the Hon. Mrs. Aldsworth was certainy non-operative. Plot's account is mentioned, which speaks of Freemasons as "Fellows of the Society." In all these instances there is no mention of apprenticeship, those who were admitted or accepted were thereupon spoken of as Fellows.

It is obvious that all this is compatible either with "entering" as an esoteric ceremony and "passing" a mere form, or the other way about, entering a form and passing a secret ceremony, or even with the supposition that there was nothing worthy of being called an initiation at all.

Speth sums up this part of his argument by supposing that, during the transition between his two intermediate periods, the lodges with non-operative members

... gradually dropped the apprentices from their meetings, and finally became, what we next meet, assmblages of gentlemen.

But, as we have suggested, the dropping of the apprentices, or their exclusion (which Speth assumed) would be automatic as the lodge became non-operative in character, if honorary members were passed to the fellowship immediately after entry. It does not seem necessary to suppose, however, that operative lodges ceased to exist in England, though it is quite probable that they would become less and less permanent. The Scottish lodges, superintending, as they did, all trade matters in their district, naturally kept records of their

⁶³ Lyon op. cit., p. 416.

proceedings. But it is quite possible to suppose that English working masons went on with their traditional ceremonies when apprentices were indentured with their employer, and when they had served their time. One thing alone would keep the custom alive, and that would be the treat the young craftsman had to stand all round. It is, however, quite possible, or even probable, that the usage was a dying one, and it may have been well nigh extinct by the beginning of the eighteenth century; but again, it may not. In the absence of records it is impossible to be certain; yet in the scraps of old Masonic usage that turned up about 1720 and later it seems to be taken for granted that a gentleman Mason might pretty confidently expect to find a "free brother," as the Sloane MS. puts it, wherever stone masons were working; and there are strong indications of a tradition that the presence of a working mason was necessary to make the action of a lodge valid.

Speth then takes up another aspect of the situation he has assumed; were the members of the non-operative lodges of gentlemen masons acquainted with the secrets of the apprentices? And he says;

If so, then as we only know of one ceremony being usual, the two degrees must have been practically welded into one.

To support this he advances the fact that we never hear of more than one oath. Randle Holme only gives one oath, according to which the secrets are only to be communicated to the "masters and fellows," apprentices not being mentioned. Aubrey, who said the adoption "was very formally adds that it is "with an oath of Secrecy." Pritchard contains only one oath, and for that matter, as we have already noted, the early French rituals of 1745, and even later, have no more. Yet this is not conclusive, for, as we have also seen, the Grand Mystery implies another oath besides the one given. The oath mentioned above is in the handwriting of Randle Holme, and is bound up with the copy of the Old Charges known as Harleian MS. No. 2054 and what seem to be a sheet of lodge accounts. It runs as follows:

There is seu'rall words & signes of a free mason to be revailed to y'u w'eh as y'o will answ: before God at the great and terrible day of Judgm't y'u keep secret and not revail the same to any in the heares of any p'son W [whomsoever?] but to the Mrs & fellows of the said Society of free masons so helpe me God, &c. [64]

But this lodge at Chester (if we may judge from the fact that the Charges are also in Holme's own handwriting) also administered the oath contained in all these documents to abide by the several articles and points. In fact it would seem that this lack of specific reference to more than one oath does not prove there was no more than one. And the Chetwade Crawley MS. [65] (which was discovered some years after this paper of Speth's was written) distinctly says that the oath was "administered anew." But even this document, like the Grand Mystery, seems to imply yet another oath not given, possibly because it was embodied in the charges.

⁶⁴ Gould, Hist. Vol ii, p 308

⁶⁵ A.Q.C., Vol. xvii, p. 9i. Hughan gives here a brief account of this MS. and its discovery. Like at least one other MS. Catechism it was found in an old book, the original owner of which was unknown. Expert opinion, based on the character of the handwriting, puts the approximate date as 1730. Hughan is contemptuous of this group of documents, but seems, rather unwillingly, compelled to admit that this one (perhaps because it has never been published) may afford some light on the usages of the period.

There now follows an argument which seems rather questionable, and it was naturally taken up in the discussion. Speth said that

... the necessity of two degrees arose from the absolute need of two signs or modes of recognition, and if, therefore the gentlemen received both degrees, they would have been in possession of more than one.

Lane retorted that "a multiplicity of signs and words" exist today, any of which would serve for recognition, and that their combination would not justify us in assuming (presumably from the outside) that each one presupposed "a distinct and separate degree." Which is quite true, and it may be said, though the point did not arise in the discussion, that it is obvious that a single word or sign would never serve as a permanent means of recognition. It would have to be surrounded and guarded, as it were, by others, in order that two strangers could step by step assure themselves each of the other's right. In fact, precisely what might be understood by the Scottish phrase "the secrets of the Mason word." But besides this we have a "multiplicity" of means of recognition given in the Old Catechisms which are not ritual in character (though they may, some of them at least, have obscure ritual references) but are purely practical; such as coughing, or clearing the throat three times; putting the left stirrup over the saddle when dismounting from a horse; saying that a stone lies loose, or is hollow; asking where the master is; or throwing one's handkerchief over the left shoulder and the like. So that the reference by Holme "to severall words and signes," Aubrey's "certain signes and watchwords" and Plot's "certain secret signes" prove nothing to the point, though the doggrel [66] verses from "the Prophecy of Roger Bacon" may refer to more than this:

ffree Masons beware Brother Bacon advises Interlopers break in & Ispoil your Divices Your Giblin and Square are all out of door And Jachin and Boaz shall bee secretts no more.

This is appended to the Stanley MS. of the Old Charges, and from internal evidences is known to be of a date between April, 1713, and August, 1714. There is also the doggrel verse in the Mason's Examination:

An enter'd Mason I have been Boaz and Jachin I have seen A Fellow I was sworn most rare And know the Astler, Diamond and Square I know the Master's part full well As honest Maughbin will you tell. [67]

⁶⁶ A.Q.C., Vol. 1, p. 127. Speth here, as early as 1888, argued that this piece of coarse, not to say obscene, doggrel, was an important indication of the character of the Masonic ritual previous to the formation of the Grand Lodge. His analysis of this "Prophecy of Brother Roger Bacon ... woh Hee writ on ye N: E: Square of ye Pyramids of Egypt" has been universally accepted as demonstrating that it must have been composed between after the Peace of Utrecht and before the death of Queen Anne, the first ten lines consisting of cryptic allusions to important events that occurred at that time. He stresses the phrase "Interlopers break in," and suggests that it may refer to the influx of non-operatives, who were gaining control by sheer force of numbers, and were inclined to modify the old customs or introduce unheard of novelties. At least it does seem to indicate Masonic activity and evolution before 1716.

⁶⁷ Another version of these verses is given in Prichard's "Master's Part," but broken up for catechetical purposes. As the "Dissection" presents three degrees under their present names the line "A fellow I was sworn most rare" has been edited into "A Master Mason I was made most rare."

This, Hughan contended, proved not two, but three degrees; which is quite possible seeing it was published in 1723, at the same time it does not necessarily have to be so interpreted if we suppose Master and Fellow were synonymous terms. Another version [68] of this catechism, the Mystery of Freemasons, was published in 1730, said to have been found "Amongst the Papers of a Deceased Brother." This has a note that is very much to the purpose. Having given the questions about the Kitchen and Hall, by which an "Enter'd Apprentice" was to be distinguished from a "Brother Mason," there follows another about age to the same end, and then the following:

N.B. When you are first made a Mason you are only enter'd Apprentice [69] and till you are made a Master, or as they call it, pass'd the Master's Part, you are only an enter'd Apprentice, and consequently must answer under 7, for if you say above [7] they will expect the Master's Word and Signs.

Note. There is not one Mason in a Hundred that will be at the Expense to pass the Master's Part, except it be for Interest.

Incidentally one might ask what interest would induce Masons to be at the expense? To qualify for office in the lodge? But in any case, as late as 1730, when the present three degrees were certainly known, this document appears to envisage only two, of which the superior one was the Master or Brother Mason. But "Brother Mason" would seem to be equivalent to Fellow, or Fellow of the Craft. Of course the note may have been interpolated by an editor who was a non- Mason, so that as evidence it is dubious; but as an indication it may have some value. As Speth remarked, though the spurious rituals published after this imply three degrees, they also reveal, by all kinds of discrepancies and inconsistencies, an original two degree system.

The last period, the purely speculative, can be dealt with very shortly. The evidence of the first edition of the Constitutions is brought forward, which has already been discussed. Speth says of the Grand Lodge that

... it was admittedly looked upon as replacing the assembly.

He could well have put it more strongly and said that it was a conscious effort to revive the Assembly, and actually was an Assembly for a few years. It was the force of changed circumstances that turned it into a representative body such as we now understand by a Grand Lodge. If, therefore, there was a tradition that the passing or admitting of masters was a matter for the Assembly, and not for any chance gathering of seven masons, it would

⁶⁸ So far as we know this document has not been recently published. Gould (Op. cit. Vol. iv, p. 278) says it first appeared in the Daily Journal, Aug. 15, 1730. Chetwode Crawley (A. Q.C., Vol. xviii, p. 141) says it was copied in the same month by The Dublin Intelligence. Franklin (before he became a Mason) reproduced it with some small variations, in The Pennsylvania Gazette of Dec. 3rd following. But it was reprinted in London in the form of "broadsheets," and it may have been from one of these that he took it. It was reproduced many times and under different names, such as The Grand Whimsey, The Puerile Signs and Wonders of a Freemason and so on. The Catechism is obviously a version of the Mason's Examinations

⁶⁹ Or, as a MS. copy, discovered a few years ago by Bro. Songhurst, has it, "you are only entered an Apprentice," a variation that may be of importance in regard to the origin and intention of the term "Entered Apprentice." This MS. was also found in an old book under similar circumstances to the Chetwode Crawley MS. The handwriting and paper appear to be consistent with its being at least as old as 1730, and it may be an independent version.

fully account for the clause in Payne's Regulation xiii requiring this, just as the changed circumstances and increased numbers would at the same time tend to make it a dead letter.

In regard to this Speth countered Hughan's interpretation that the Regulation implies that the three degrees had already been completed in 1721, or at least in 1723 when it was published, and that the order of the words, "Masters and Fellow Craft," and the subsequent change in the second edition to "Fellow Craft and Master," was without any significance, by pointing out that if three degrees were originally referred to, then the minute recording the repeal of the clause, which mentions only "Masters," produced the extraordinary result that the lodges could make Masters but that Fellow Crafts could only be made in Grand Lodge.

He refers also to Dr. Stukeley's statement that he was

... the first person made a Freemason in London for many years. We had great difficulty to find members enough to perform the ceremony. [⁷⁰]

Speth was inclined to see in this remark, concerning an event which took place (according to Stukeley's diary) on Jan. 6, 1721, an evidence of the difficulty in finding Masons competent to work the second degree, that is to pass Masters or Fellows. That the difficulty was anything but accidental, or so to speak, local, that is within the limits of the Doctor's friends and their acquaintance, is a little hard to believe, if there really was a second traditional ceremony. Really there is nothing in what he says to give the least indication that he here referred to a second part and not merely to the "making" or "entering." Stukeley does indeed seem to have been concerned in an attempt to institute another degree or society, but whatever the "Order of the Book, or Roman Knighthood" may have been it seems to have died still-born. [71] The suggestion that the difficulty mentioned by him was due to his desire to go beyond the first grade was quite unnecessary from Speth's point of view. Having argued that in lodges which had ceased to have any Operative element in them would inevitably tend to amalgamate the two ceremonies into one, it only served to weaken his case to suppose that the occasional lodge formed to initiate Stukeley worked them separately, or as would be implied by the suggestion, that the two grades were given separately in London. Such a supposition really fitted Hughan's theory much better, that the three degrees had already been invented by the leaders of the Grand Lodge, for being recent inventions it would be only natural that but few would know them. However it is probable that in this Speth was following Gould, who had, in his paper on Dr. Stukeley, [72] made the same suggestion some years before. Neither this interpretation, nor the opposing one that fits Hughan's theory, really follow from what Stukeley actually says in his various allusions to the event. In his autobiography he remarks under the year 1720, that:

His curiosity led him to be initiated into the mysteries of Masonry, suspecting it to be the remains of the mysteries of the antients, when with difficulty a number sufficient was to be found in all London. [73]

He gives no hint how he came to "suspect" that Masonry was a survival of the ancient Mysteries, and still less what conclusion he came to after his initiation. His account is quite

⁷⁰ Gould Concise History, p. 223, also the larger work, Vol. iii, p. 36 and A.Q.C., Vol. vi, p. 127.

⁷¹ Gould History, Vol. iii p. 40, note 6.

⁷² A.Q.C., Vol. vi, p. 141.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 130.

consistent with the hypothesis that he was satisfied as to its antiquity, and this is strengthened by the fact that his interest was much greater and more lasting than that of his predecessor Ashmole. This second allusion to the difficulty in collecting sufficient number to form a lodge can only be interpreted (seeing that we know for a fact that there were Masons enough in London to form a number of regular lodges) as referring to his own circle. Like so much else of the evidence it is ambiguous; it can be made to fit into the most widely opposite theories.

PART 6

HUGHAN had definitely left the Scottish evidence out of consideration, though, as Speth remarks, it "would at first sight have told greatly in his favour," that is if read in the light of Lyon's interpretation of it. Without this pre- supposition one would be inclined to say that on their face the old Scottish records shout aloud on almost every page that two degrees existed from the first.

Speth alludes also to the "Masters Lodges" which appeared in London (and elsewhere, even in America) about 1730, and persisted, in name at least, all through the eighteenth century. Later on they consisted merely of the members of a warranted lodge assembled as a lodge of masters, but at the beginning they were separate entities, composed of the members of a number of other lodges, who were masters of course, and that such lodges worked only the master's degree, and worked for the ordinary lodges which for some reason could not, or at least did not, do it for themselves. [74]

In an Appendix to the paper some remarks are offered on the nature of this original second degree. The long note in the first Book of Constitutions on Hiram Abif is adduced, and Speth says that the first mention of a name or fact cannot be co-incident with, but must be posterior to, its introduction. Hughan of course replied that this did not affect the question, as he held that the three degrees were in existence when the Constitutions were first published. But the curious fact remains that the name in this form appeared in Coverdale's translation of the Bible, and its immediate successors, all of which were so thoroughly suppressed that they are exceedingly rare. why should inventors of the 18th century have gone behind the Authorized Version for the name of their hero? However, this point was not raised in the discussion.

In conclusion Speth's theory may be thus summarized. In the Operative period the Apprentice was "made" a Mason by some ceremony of a secret character, and received certain signs and words and so on for recognition. At the end of his servitude, his passing into the ranks of free craftsmen, Masters of the Art and fellows of the Fraternity, was celebrated by another secret ceremony, in which further signs and words and so on were communicated, and that this ceremony contained the essentials of the present third degree. Then that during the "mainly speculative" period it became habitual to work both of the ceremonies at the same time, so that the "making" became merely an adjunct or preliminary to receiving gentlemen and others as Fellows. And that finally, owing to unknown causes and influences, the first "part" was divided and two degrees made out of it, producing our present system, the title Fellowcraft being given to this interpolated double of the first degree. Hughan's theory agreed with this origin of the second degree, though it is not made quite clear if he agreed with Mackey that this doublet was the first step, and the third a final addition, or whether (as would be equally possible on his premises) that the materials of the present Master Mason degree were ancient, or whether they were, as Oliver thought in his later years, and Pike and Mackey after him, merely manufactured out of whole cloth, in the years immediately succeeding the formation of Grand Lodge, by Desaguliers, Payne, or some other individual whose name has not come down to us.

74 Lane, A.Q.C. I, 167.

In dealing with Speth's paper we have incidentally dealt with the objections raised in the discussion, especially by Hughan and Lane. There does not seem anything more of importance left to consider in what was said by these two eminent brothers. Some others who joined in the discussion call for remark, as though brief, fresh views were advanced. The Master of the Lodge, Sydney Klein, suggested a theory something like that of Mackey-Speth said of it that in trying to prove Hughan and himself both right he would in fact prove them both wrong. He supposed that in the 11th or 12th century, during the great period of mediaeval building, there would be a greatly increased demand for masons, and that in order to train new men, an apprentice degree was "thrown off downwards." This would be in order to bind the young men who were being taught the trade not to desert those who had taught them, i.e., their masters. Later, in the 17th century, at the time of the rebuilding of London after the "Great Fire," a great stimulation of activity in the Craft resulted, and that then, or shortly afterwards in the 18th century, the present third degree was separated, or thrown off upwards, from the one that had previously been the second, and which in the earliest times had been the only one. And so finally the Royal Arch, some twenty years or so later still, was again thrown off upward from the third degree, which till then had contained all the essentials of both. This puts a great deal on the supposed second degree of the pre-Grand Lodge era, but if there were only one ceremony of initiation at the start, this does seem to be the most plausible supposition.

J. Ramsden Riley agreed with Speth that there were two degrees before 1717, but seemed inclined to think that the second was something in the nature of a qualification for office as Warden or Master of a lodge and he added:

The third degree, as we now have it, is of sufficiently later date to be considered outside the degrees question.

This position would have been much strengthened had the Chetwode Crawley MS. then been known, for that on its face seems to describe in some detail just such a second degree as he supposes. On the other hand, Riley agrees with the "one degree" supporters, by holding the present third to have been a late invention, with little or nothing in it derived from tradition.

The Rev. Canon Horsley supported Speth's supposition of the amalgamation of the original two operative degrees in the early English lodges of Mainly Speculative membership, by an analogy drawn from the Catholic Church, in the sense, of course, in which that is understood by the Church of England. His illustration was drawn from the two traditional ceremonies of Baptism and Confirmation. The first of which is an initiation into membership, the second an entering into all the privileges of communion. These ceremonies are now, in the Anglican Communion at least, generally widely separated - Baptism being usual in infancy, and Confirmation delayed till years of something like discretion. But there have been times when both were performed at the same time, and there is nothing to prevent this being done in the Anglican Communion in the case of one baptised in later life. He might also have added another example from ordination. It is true that in the English Church a Candidate for Holy Orders is made to serve as a deacon for a short time before being made a priest, but in effect the order of deacons does not exist, any more than does the degree of Entered Apprentice in Masonry, for the Candidate normally remains such for the shortest possible period. In the Eastern Church the diaconate is a

permanent order, as every church has to have a deacon to serve it as well as a priest; it is not merely a step to the higher order.

Edward Conder, Jr., the author of the well-known work on the Mason's Company of London, agreed with Speth that master meant, or could mean, master of the craft, and not necessarily an employer or master of the work, and that only such masters (of the craft) could become fellows, and he quoted as example the following from the records of the London Company:

Reed of Thomas Taylor ye late Apprentice of Thomas Stanley, made free ye third day of July 1634 by way of gratuitie to this house XXs. for his admission then to be a Master IIIs. IIId. for his entrance VId.

Total XXIIIs. Xd.

But he said he was unable to accept the theory that any great secrets of the Craft, beyond the necessary sign and perhaps word, were impacted to the newly passed master.

He went on to say that it was only in there being two forms of the Mason Word in use that a Fellow could be certainly distinguished from a runaway Apprentice, but that he could not agree to there being "an extra ceremony for those who joined the fellowship," and that he thought the conditions of the period of the opening of the 18th century, the prevalence of Clubs of all kinds, the need to interest men of higher intellectual attainments, accounted for a complete transformation of the character of the traditional ceremonies, and the addition of such features as made them real initiations, and that

... as time went on the protaplasmie germ of mysticism which is in every society where secrecy is observed gradually developed and became a real factor under the guidance of such men as Anderson, Desaguliers and Martin ffolkes.

It would almost appear that he had misunderstood Speth to suppose one form or ceremony for the mastership, followed by another for the fellowship; but this impression is probably due to an unfortunate choice of expression. In any case it would seem, though he said he held to the two degree theory, that he was nearer Hughan than Speth. For he scarcely allows the possibility of sufficient ceremonial to be called an initiation to the second grade, while Hughan was willing to grant not only the possibility but even the probability of the private communication of a pass word to the newly admitted fellow.

John Yarker, the author of Arcane Schools, also supported Speth on the point that master originally meant master of the craft, and was what the apprentice became after serving his time. He made another remark which is very much to the point in considering the arguments on the other side.

The fact is we know nothing of ceremonies from minutes either Scotch or English, and we have no right to expect to know anything

Dr. Chetwode Crawley, while professing to be unable to make up his mind, quoted the historian Hallam; who said of a certain question, "A strong conviction either way is not attainable on the evidence."

But though he could not make up his mind, yet he delivered a shrewd blow at the whole structure of Hughan's argument. He said that the latter might seem to be capable of being reduced to syllogistic form, such as this;

There is direct evidence of a Degree (or secret ceremony)

There is no direct evidence of a second Degree (or secret ceremony)

Therefore,

There never was more than one Degree.

This as he said is obviously not a syllogism but a sophism, it requires some other premises, such as;

The only evidence to be admitted is direct evidence or

The indirect evidence adduced is irrevelant or insufficient or

No Degree (or secret ceremony) can have existed unless we have direct evidence of it.

Really, as has been pointed out, the direct evidence for any secret ceremony is scanty and ambiguous. But on this question of evidence, and the proper limits of hypothesis and the employment of assumptions and inferences, something more will have to be said later.

One American brother, W. H. Upton, intervened in the discussion in a letter that was almost an article in itself. He valiantly espoused the traditional belief in the antiquity of three degrees as separate and distinct entities. First stating his conviction that the Haughfoot minute alone established the fact that in Scotland in 1702, there was a plurality of ceremonies with corresponding secrets, he sets out to state his own theory. This is that the apprentice received a charge, he quotes the Alnwick rule that has been already referred to [Ante, page 174] that any Mason who took an apprentice was to enter him within one year and give him his charge, and this charge he believes was not the series of articles preceded by the "Legend of the Craft" contained in the old Constitutions, but the set of articles that appears only in a few of the latest copies of these MSS., and is there called the Apprentice Charges. This he thinks would have been suitable to his years and situation. But at Alnwick, where working stone-masons "entered" their apprentices long after the Grand Lodge had been formed, the copy of the charges used - it was used, for it was written into the first pages of the record book-has not got the Apprentice charges. Nevertheless, it is possible that in some places the apprentice was informed of the "history" of the Craft, and then caused to promise to observe the "charges general," and, where they had been adopted, the Apprentice Charges also. And that at the end of his time on being made free, he received once more the "Charges General" and the "Charges Singular" for Masters and Fellows. The repetition causes no difficulty, for they are addressed not only to the entrants but to all present.

Upton then went on to say that after seven years the

... Apprentice was released from his indentures whether a good workman or not. If unskillful he probably nevertheless called himself a master of his trade, but became a layer or rough mason and perhaps joined the guild masons.

This antithesis between the Freemason and Gild Masons is one of those elusive fancies that cannot be exploded because there is never any tangible evidence offered in support of it. The Freemasons were Gild Masons where there was a gild. In Scotland many of the old lodges exercised all the functions of a gild. There was no difference in Craftsmanship between the two, and though in the 16th century (and still more in the 17th) we may

assume the existence of working Masons, members of gilds or companies, who were not Freemasons, that was only due to the decay of the Operative Fraternity. The suggestion, too, that only a comparatively small group of apprentices became skilled Craftsmen seems very strange. It is as a matter of fact impossible for the average youth to work continuously for seven years at a handicraft and not be proficient at the end. If he was too incapable for this, he would have been so obviously deficient that he would never have been accepted in the first place. However this is not an essential feature of Upton's theory. He supposes, in agreement with Lyon and Hughan, that apprentices were present during the "passing" of the Fellowcraft, but that the latter received certain reserved secrets, such as a word whispered in the ear, or something of that sort. At this time he supposes the Legend of the Craft was read and the oath taken to keep the articles of the Charges. Here there seems a curious inconsistency; it was inappropriate that the apprentice should receive this charge when entered, as being beyond his capacity, yet he had to be present when the fellow received it! The Third Degree he considers to have been the same thing as the installation of the Master of the lodge, which has persisted in America as the Past Master's Degree. This installation ceremony appeared as a "Postscript" in the first Book of Constitutions, and, though only guardedly hinted at, there was obviously some secret ceremonial attached to it. Though, on the other hand, there is nothing to show that this was something restricted only to installed Masters. Still it is possible that there is more in this suggestion than might at first appear.

Upton expressed belief, however, in the antiquity of the Legend of the Builder. He had just referred to the passage in the Cooke MS. referring to the charge to be given to those "tht be mad masters" and their examination in the "articuls aftr writen," and says:

Whether it was on this occasion, or what I have called the second degree, that the lesson connected with the widow's son was unfolded I do not venture to say .

And he sums up as follows:

When our "work" was revised, about 1723, in my opinion the Apprentice Charge was eliminated; a large part of what had been the second degree was thrown into the first; an operative lecture was put in the second degree as a graceful tribute to the past; the legend of the builder either remained in, or was transferred from the second to the third degree; and as all Fellows were henceforth to be "virtual" and not "actual" masters the "secrets of the chair" were detached from the third ceremony and reserved, as before, for actual Masters, in the old sense of that term [i.e., Masters of the lodges]; and finally, that nothing essential was taken from or added to "the body of Masonry" at that time.

This is very ingenious, but it seems very complicated, and it presupposes conscious, deliberate "ritual tinkering" on the lines of an American Grand Lodge Committee on Work, with all the modern American conception of the supreme authority of such bodies to do whatever they may choose. It is not a process that could have come about naturally, by development, it implies a thorough shuffling of the pack and a new deal! Finally the Grand Lodge, in 1722, when it authorized the new Constitutions, did not supersede the old custom of reading the Charges to the Apprentice, for it was directed that the new version of them in the printed Constitutions was "to be read at the making of new Brethren," which at that time certainly meant initiating "Entered Apprentices."

PART 7

SO far as we have yet gone in our account of the different hypotheses advanced regarding Masonic degrees, it will be noticed that one aspect of the problem has hardly emerged, and it is really by no means an unimportant one. Practically all the scholars whose views we have considered were agreed on one point; that there had been a great expansion in the initiatory rites of the Craft. The controversy really was only about the amount of the additional matter, and whether it was pure innovation and invention, or based upon genuine tradition. The question, that so far no one had raised, was how and why this expansion came about.

We say it is not important, and for this reason. The various solutions offered for the main problem rest on a nice discrimination of the value and implications of scattered references and fragmentary and ambiguous records. Every possible interpretation must of necessity be mainly a structure of inferences based on the scanty facts; and what these inferences are will depend almost entirely on a more or less conscious preconception, or pattern, in the mind. It is obvious that to be able to show that a given explanation demands unusual and improbable motives on the part of the actors in the process is to present a very formidable argument against it, no matter how logical and self consistent it may be in itself. Conversely, if it can be shown that each step in the development was a natural one, following lines that can be observed in any human society, it will be a very strong confirmation of the theory advanced.

It seemed to be taken for granted that the great change from the ceremonial, simple, bare and crude (as it is variously said to be) of the operative Masons, to the elaborate and ornate ritual of the speculatives, was so natural and inevitable that no explanation was necessary on this point. It was casually assumed that part of it was due to the fashion of the period which expressed itself in the formation of all kinds of eccentric clubs and societies with bizarre ceremonials, and also in part due to a desire or a necessity to dress up the alleged "crude" and "imperfect" initiations practiced by "rough and ignorant workmen" so they would have an appeal for "educated and cultured gentlemen."

But as we have said, this was only assumed, and was merely referred to in passing allusions. The value of an answer to this question as an additional test of the validity of the inferences based on the evidence had not been seen. We are not at all sure even that Robert Freke Gould, to whom we now come, definitely realized this point; though he did advance a general explanation of the way in which an additional degree was inserted in the original two degree system. His theory is that it was due almost entirely to a misunderstanding of one or two sentences in the first edition of Anderson's Constitutions. At first glance it looks very inadequate, but on closer examination there is not a little to be said in its favor. It can be shown that other "expansions" of the ritual are due to mistakes and misconceptions [75], so that the supposition is not at all improbable in itself.

⁷⁵ We may be permitted to refer to the series of articles, "The Precious Jewels," which appeared in THE BUILDER in 1926 and 1927, for an example of this kind of thing. It is there shown how the furniture, ornaments and jewels of the lodge all sprang by a series of misunderstandings from a common root.

GOULD'S THEORY OF THE ORIGIN OF DEGREES

An attempt to present a coherent account of Gould's position is, however, singularly difficult, except in the broadest outline. His style is discursive to extreme; he constantly interrupts the course of his argument to explore each by-path as he comes to it, and it is necessary to read him with the closest attention to avoid losing the thread of the discourse and getting lost in a maze of apparently disconnected facts. Although it would not be quite fair, without qualification, he might be described as essentially a man of strong prejudices who had painstakingly cultivated the method of impartiality. At least his prejudice on the subject of the Grand Lodge of the Ancients crops out in almost every reference to it. Legalism has had a great deal to do with the development of Masonic orthodoxies (as it has, indeed, in every traditional system) and Gould had the typically legalistic type of mind, one would judge, quite apart from his training, to which a form of law means more than the human needs and motives in which it is rooted. To him the premier Grand Lodge was legitimate; and consequently, by exclusion, that of the Ancients was illegitimate, heretical and schismatic.

This is all quite outside our subject of course, but it has a bearing upon a proper appreciation of Gould's arguments, for it certainly seems that it caused a bias in his judgment which led him to summarily reject certain statements made by Dermott in Ahiman Rezon, which if admitted as evidence would have militated against some of his conclusions, or at least would have modified them in some important details.

Another difficulty in presenting his views lies in the fact that it would almost seem as if he had to some degree progressively changed them. Of this, though, we are by no means certain; in the preface to the Concise History he expresses himself in such a way as to imply that he held the same views then, on the subject of Masonic Degrees, as he did when he wrote his large history in 1882. Yet it must be said, that were a reader to have no other source of information than the latter work he would come to the conclusion either that the author had been unable to definitely make up his mind on the subject, or even that he favoured the hypothesis advanced by Findel and supported by Hughan and Mackey. He accepts and insists upon Lyon's view that the "mason word" was the only secret communicated in early Scottish lodges, even indeed going beyond him, in throwing doubt on the latter's admission that this may have implied something more than its literal meaning [76]; he equally insists that in the old lodge at York intrants were merely "admitted and sworn," and gives the impression that there is no probability of there being anything more than this in other parts of England in the seventeenth century [77]. Yet as we shall see he later protested against this very argument.

In a paper read before Quatuor Coronati Lodge in 1886, On Some Old Scottish Customs [78] he emphasized the comparative poverty of the ritual employed in North Britain, stating that

⁷⁶ Gould, History, Vol. iii, p. 62 [Yorston Edition]

⁷⁷ Ibid, Vol. iii, p. 116. Chapters xvi to xviii should be read to fully appreciate the statement made in the article.

⁷⁸ A.Q.C., Vol. i, p. 10. Cf., also Gould Op. cit., Vol. iii, pp. 55 - 70, and elsewhere.

... as a simple matter of fact the only degree (of a speculative or symbolic character) known in the early Masonry of Scotland was that in which the legend of the Craft was read and the benefit of the Mason word conferred

This belief in a material difference between the two countries is an important factor in the development of his views. Whether he regarded the Scottish Craft as being degenerate, or as having been defective from its origin, is nowhere really made quite clear. [79] But as we are not concerned to follow out the development of his thought it will be more direct to consider his later and more mature pronouncements. These will be found chiefly in the "Digression on Degrees" in the Concise History and the paper entitled The Degrees of Pure and Ancient Freemasonry [80].

In the latter he states his purpose as being to sum up.

... the conclusions that seem to be deducible from the evidence, with respect to the existence of Masonic Degrees in 1717 - 1738, and presumably from a time far more remote.

and then he goes on to say:

If we begin with the three Craft ... degrees of today, their devolution can be traced with sufficient exactitude from the year 1723, nor is it reasonable ... to believe that any change in the method of imparting the secrets of Masonry could possibly have been carried out by the Grand Lodge of England between 1717 and 1723. But during the period immediately preceding the era of Grand Lodges there is much darkness and uncertainty. To a necessarily great extent therefore, all speculations with regard to the more remote past of the sodality must repose on inference or conjecture; and deductions which are accepted with easy faith by some, will be rejected as irrational by others. The boundaries of legitimate conjecture cannot indeed be defined ex cathedra by anyone and the utmost we can do is to pursue our researches according to the evidential methods which have received the approval of the best authorities.

We have quoted this passage at length because while in the first part he expresses an opinion that Hughan, for one, regarded as "irrational"; in the latter part he lays down the limits of the degree of certainty we may hope to reach in this investigation in a most admirable manner, and which gives others full warrant to disagree with him!

He then proceeds to refer his readers to a paper read some years before, On the Antiquity of Masonic Symbolism [81]. In this he deals with much the same subject but holds that the term symbolism is more inclusive than Degrees. He evidently used it in rather a peculiar sense, and we may take it broadly that by it he understands all the esoteric secrets of Masonry, signs, words, ritual, ceremony, as well as the symbols and emblems as usually understood. Each of these essays is along quite different lines and to adequately summarize them would take altogether too much space. We shall, therefore, adopt a shorter way, that we hope will be even more satisfactory than to follow his arguments step by step. With most of the actual evidence he builds on we have already become familiar and in consequence there is no need to take it in detail. What we propose to do is to pick out what

⁷⁹ Op. cit., Vol. iii, p. 64. In this passage Gould seems even to doubt whether there was any connection at all between the Masonry of Scotland and that of England in matters esoteric.

⁸⁰ A.Q.C., Vol. xvi, p. 28. Reprinted in the Collected Essays.

⁸¹ Ibid., Vol. iii, p. 7. Also reprinted in the Collected Essays.

appear to be the distinguishing features of his theories, and the arguments by which he supports them.

We have already seen one general argument by which he supports the main contention which he held in common with Speth, the inherent improbability of radical innovations being introduced in the six years between 1717 and 1723. And it would seem that this, for him, was the real starting point, when he discovered the significant differences between the first and second editions of the Constitutions in regard to Old Regulation XIII, and compared them with the entry in the minutes of the Grand Lodge of Nov. 27, 1725, repealing the clause in question and authorizing the lodges "to make Masters at their discretion."

In regard to this we have a case, not of the "easy faith" of one being "rejected as irrational" by another, but of the same thing being interpreted in diametrically opposing fashion by two such keen minds as Hughan and Gould. If we wish for an authority we can take our choice, but it will hardly be a wholly satisfactory position to depend on authority alone in such a case.

AN ESTIMATE OF DR. ANDERSON

Hughan definitely took the stand that, in the first edition of the Constitutions, the clause, "Apprentices and must be admitted Masters and Fellowcraft only here" (that is in the Grand Lodge) must be interpreted by the amendment that appeared in the second edition of 1738. He says:

At all events Dr. Anderson ought to know what he meant by Masters and Fellowcraft in 1723, and that he intended the words to refer to two distinct degrees appears to me conclusive by the editorial remarks in 1738, under the year 1725 [82].

Just what Hughan meant by the last remark we are not quite clear. In the account of the progress of the Craft up to the year 1738, that was added to the second edition, Anderson makes no reference to this amendment in the brief notice of the meeting of the Grand Lodge on Nov. 27, 1725. The note to Old Regulation XIII on page 160 of the work hardly seems to be properly called an editorial remark, as it appears in the form of an extract from the minutes of Grand Lodge. But assuming, by elimination, that this is what Hughan referred to, it may certainly be admitted - as every one has done - that Anderson did here intend two distinct degrees by the terms Master and Fellowcraft. It may also be admitted that Dr. Anderson knew in 1738 what he meant in 1723; but it does not at all necessarily follow from that that in the later edition he intended to let his readers into the secret. Anderson has been very freely accused of literary dishonesty as well as inaccuracy, but it seems to us not entirely with justice. His work we must remember was official, for though the publication was his own private venture apparently, he depended on the approbation of the Grand Master and the Grand Lodge. Before we cast our stone at him let us ask ourselves if no other official works are similarly inaccurate and evasive in regard to awkward facts. We all know that often enough to speak of an explanation of some occurrence as "official" is as good as to say it is to be received with caution, or even that it is to be highly suspected. But we do not have to go to such pronouncements made on behalf of governments and churches, there are a sufficient number concerned with the Craft to give the Masonic historian constant trouble. We do not accuse those responsible of dishonesty, because we realize that such statements are expressions of practical compromises, or are ex parte justifications for action taken. If Anderson is to be held guilty, we must condemn also the Grand Lodge, which was equally conversant with whatever was concealed, and which doubtless would have rejected and condemned a full and plain statement of the case.

But this is somewhat of a digression. Gould and Hughan drew directly opposite conclusions from the same passages. As was intimated above, the facts may be fitted into a number of different patterns. We may liken Anderson's account to those curious perspective diagrams which alternately seem to represent a cavity and then a solid; or to one of the puzzle pictures that may sometimes be found in old print shops, where a study of "still life," or a landscape, resolves itself into a grinning skull when looked at from another point of view. The point of view in this case will probably be determined by some latent bias or prejudice in the student's mind. To illustrate we may quote Gould himself:

⁸² Ibid, Vol. x, p. 132

It has been too much the habit - especially in America - [this was written in 1893, and presumably Gould had Mackey and perhaps Pike in mind] to assume that Masonry was Scottish before 1717, and English afterwards. Thus it is contended (with regard to the former period) that as there was only one degree in Scotland, a plurality of degrees was unknown in Universal Masonry - the English evidence being coolly and quietly ignored. But the tables are turned, with a vengeance, in 1723, when the Old Manuscript Constitutions "digested" by Anderson for the Grand Lodge of England, are assumed from thenceforth to govern every Mason under the sun [83].

The last statement is a little irrelevant, but it states very well that legalistic attitude, of which Gould was not himself always guiltless, which has done so much to obscure the real truth of the history and development of the Craft. But we see here one of the reasons why Gould was always so strenuously insisting on the gulf fixed between Scottish and English Masonry before 1717. The English evidence, that he says is ignored, is very scanty, and so disconnected as to be very difficult to bring it all into a coherent system, at least one that will command assent. As a matter of fact, Gould himself in the discussion of it in his History failed to definitely point out its implication. On the other hand the Scottish evidence is most abundant, comparatively speaking; and as Speth put it, it was "laid down by a consensus of authorities" that it proves that apprentices when "entered" received all the secrets known to the Craft in that country [84]. It was very natural to interpret the English remains in the light of this accepted conclusion, and this we may suppose was the unconscious influence that prevented Hughan from seeing the discrepancy between the first and second editions of the Constitutions or appreciating its real significance.

Though we quoted Anderson's version in dealing with Mackey [85] it may be better to cite the crucial passages again. In Regulation XIII, on page 61 of 1723 edition, the second clause runs;

Apprentices must be admitted Masters and Fellowcraft only here, unless by a Dispensation.

As the regulation is dealing with the Quarterly Communications the words "only here" mean "only in Grand Lodge."

It has previously been pointed out that we are not sure whether this is the actual wording of the Regulation as read over by Payne on St. John the Baptist's Day in 1721, as recorded by Stukeley in his Diary [86], but it is all that is otherwise known about them.

In the 1738 edition the Regulations (distinguished as the Old Regulations) are printed in parallel columns with a set of New Regulations that supersede them. First there is a change in the wording of the Old Regulation XIII which the reader would naturally take to be an exact reproduction of the original. It now runs:

Apprentices must be admitted Fellow Crafts and Masters only here, unless by a Dispensation from the Grand Master.

⁸³ Ibid, Vol. vi, p. 76. Review of Vernon's History of Freemasonry in the Province of Rowburgh, Peebles and Selkirkshire.

⁸⁴ Ibid, Vol. i, p. 143.

⁸⁵ THE BUILDER, P. 199, July, 1928.

⁸⁶ Gould, Concise History, p. 392 (Macoy Edition) also A.Q.C. Vol. vi, p. 130

Not only have the words "from the Grand Master" been added, which is unimportant, but the order of the terms "Master" and "Fellow Craft" has been reversed. This may have a good deal of significance. The old Scottish minutes very frequently spoke of "maister" or "mester" and "fallow of craft" but rarely or never, at least we have not noticed any instance, of "fellow of craft and master." In the old Operative sense of the terms the first was the correct sequence. The apprentice having become master of his craft was eligible, or became, a fellow of the fraternity; or in other crafts, of the gild or company. But when the interpolated degree had been given the name "Fellow Craft" it was naturally less appropriate to follow the old sequence.

Against this "corrected" version of the Old Regulation appears in the second column the note:

On 22 Nov. 1725. The Master of a Lodge with his Wardens and a competent Number of the Lodge assembled in due Form can make Masters and Fellows at Discretion.

It must be admitted that in going back here to the Master-Fellow sequence the note rather disturbs the argument drawn above from the misquotation of the original clause. Perhaps it was nothing but carelessness and general inaccuracy. Anderson may have been muddled between a new phrase that he used more or less consciously, and an old one that came by habit. It is hard to say. In any case we may charitably suppose that the note of the repeal of the clause was not intended to be misunderstood as an accurate transcript of the actual resolution, for it is evident from the remainder of the notes and amendments that complete accuracy was not proffered, nor, presumably, expected. The very next item, for example, begins:

On 25 Nov. 1723. It was agreed (though forgotten to be recorded in the Grand Lodge Book) ...

With records kept in this way a paraphrase might seem as good as the actual text! It may be as well to recall that this forgotten resolution was passed at the second meeting recorded in the Minute Book. We now come to the amendment as it appears in the latter under date of Nov. 27, not Nov. 22, as Anderson, or the printer, gave it.

A Motion being made that Such part of the 13th Article of the Genll Regulations relating to the Making of Mars only at a Quarterly Communication may be repealed. And that the Mars of Each Lodge, with the Consent of his Wardens and the Majority of the Brethren being Mars may make Mars at their discretion.

Now, here we see that Anderson's paraphrase differs quite a little from the record. Not only has he inserted the words Fellows, but "a competent number of the lodge assembled in due form" is not by any means the same thing as "the Majority of the brethren being Masters." This latter is not very likely however to have been what was intended, and it might be taken that Anderson's version confirms this, for we must keep in mind that the Book of Constitutions was prepared and revised and adopted not as a history, still less a source book for history, but as a legal code. It would seem, therefore, that we can assume that what appears therein was in accordance with what was understood to be the law of 1738. Of course it does not necessarily follow that this was the same in 1725, though it may give a certain presumption that this was so.

Incidentally we may note that Hughan made a very strange slip in this place [87]. He asks:

Does not the qualification, "being Masters" so late as 1738 suggest that the Degree was not then generally worked, though it was gradually becoming better known?

The "qualification" of course was made in 1725, not 1738. The error is all the stranger in that he had quoted Anderson's 1738 paraphrase just a few lines above, in which this proviso does not appear, as we have seen; even should the suggestion be accepted that it implies that the number of Masters was very limited. As we showed above, the resolution was so loosely drawn that it is hard to say definitely what it did mean exactly, though the general intention is clear enough. Hughan would appear to have been somewhat inconsistent in advancing this particular argument seeing that he held that our present three degrees were being worked in 1723, and that Regulation XIII in speaking of Masters and Fellowcraft meant just what we would mean by the terms today. For it would follow that these new degrees had lain almost dormant in the fifteen years that had elapsed. It would almost seem as if any stick were good enough to beat the dog!

⁸⁷ A.Q.C., Vol. x, p. 132.

PART 8

WE have seen how Gould and Hughan had arrived at radically different interpretations of the real meaning of the terms Master and Fellow Craft in the first edition of Anderson's Constitutions. When such a difference of opinion arises it is fairly safe to conclude that other considerations, which may be entirely in the background, are the deciding factors. We will now have to consider the matter for ourselves in order to prepare the way to appreciate Gould's position, though we can do this, fortunately, by following the arguments of the latter scholar, collecting what he had to say upon the subject from different places.

He says, in regard to the Constitutions:

It is the custom of most people to consult a work of reference in its latest form. To this rule the Freemasons have not proved an exception, and the second edition of Anderson's Constitutions ... was universally copied from and relied upon in preference to the first [88].

As was remarked above, so far as the second edition was the official code this was perfectly proper; but of course Gould has in mind its use as a source of historical information. In another place he says:

Until a few years ago this clause [of the 1723 Regulation XIII] was very erroneously interpreted, and the fundamental principle of literary criticism - the principle that an author's meaning is to be read out of his words, and not into them - was totally disregarded. All commentators seem to have determined what the author of the Book of Constitutions (transcribing the "General Regulations" of George Payne) ought to have said, and then they set themselves to prove that he practically said it [89].

This means that, from the time when all personal recollections of the transition period had disappeared, until Gould observed the curious discrepancies between Anderson's earlier and later statements, or at least until Findel advanced his iconoclastic theories, all Masonic authors took it for granted that there always had been three degrees, and that there was no significance in the variations of phrase in the first and second editions of the Constitutions, even if they so much as knew they existed. If anyone of them did notice it he deemed it of too little moment for mention.

Gould then went on to say that the General Regulations of 1721, as published in 1723, point "with the utmost clearness" to an arrangement

... of two and not three degrees, the latter being the number which Dr. Anderson was supposed to have had in his mind when publishing his work of 1723. The simple fact being that the titles of Fellow Craft and Master Mason, which really meant the same thing in the phraseology of Scottish Operative Masons, were also used as words of indifferent application by the doctor in his "Book of Constitutions."

The passages in the Regulations which are here asserted to point so clearly to a system of two degrees are presumably such as the following:

⁸⁸ Gould, Essays, p. 223, reprinted from A.Q.C., Vol. xvi, p. 48.

⁸⁹ Concise History, p. 395

Regulation XIII: The Treasurer and Secretary shall each have a Clerk, who must be a Brother and Fellow-Craft...

Another Brother (who must be a Fellow-Craft) ... should be appointed to look after the door of the Grand Lodge...

Regulation XV: [The Grand Wardens being absent] the Grand Master ... shall order private Wardens to attend as Grand Wardens pro tempore, whose places shall be supply'd by two Fellow-Crafts of the same Lodge. ...

Regulation XVIII: If the Deputy Grand Master be sick or necessarily absent, the Grand Master may chuse any Fellow-Craft he pleases to be his Deputy pro tempore.

Gould claimed "weighty authority" for this, as Payne, who compiled the Regulations in 1721, was elected Grand Master the year after the formal institution of the Grand Lodge in 1717, and he adds [90]:

In my own judgment ... it is not credible for an instant that the symbolism of Masonry was tampered with, and expanded at the only meeting of the Grand Lodge - June 24, 1717 - which took place before we find Grand Master Payne in the chair of that august body...

The "Charges of a Freemason" as "digested" by Anderson also contain several passages of the same character. In the fourth we read:

No Brother can be a Warden till he has pass'd the part of a Fellow-Craft; nor a Master until he has acted as a Warden, nor Grand Warden until he has been a Master of a Lodge, nor a Grand Master unless he has been a Fellow-Craft before his election...

The last proviso seems to imply that in a Warden an Apprentice might be elected, and then "passed" in order to qualify him for office. If this be so it would undermine the argument based by Hughan on those minutes which record such elections of Apprentices to officer.

[91]

In the fifth charge it is enacted that

The most expert of the Fellow-Craftsmen shall be chosen or appointed the Master, or overseer of the Lord 's Work;

and,

When a Fellow-Craftsman is chosen Warden of the Work under the Master he shall be true to both Master and Fellows.

Though we cannot be sure that the Regulations as printed were exactly the same as Payne read them to Grand Lodge in 1721, and Gould's contention that the term Fellow-Craft was unknown in England till Anderson introduced through the medium of his work, if accepted, would point at least to verbal changes having been made, yet the main argument is a strong one, for Payne would presumably have protested in 1723 had any unwarranted modifications of the text been introduced, or for that matter anything that was not quite clear. Of course on the supposition that he was one of the inventors of new degrees the force of this argument would be materially weakened. But though this has been freely asserted in the past and was the line that Mackey, among many others, had taken, it must

⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 396.

⁹¹ THE BUILDER (1928), p. 197.

be remembered that it is pure supposition, without a scrap of direct evidence in its favour, while the contention made by Gould is strongly supported when we compare the above cited passages with the corresponding ones in the 1738 edition. Here we find that the term Fellow Craft has been fairly consistently changed to Master Mason. In Regulation XV latter term is added, making it read "two Fellow Crafts or Master Masons," and in XVII Fellow Craft is changed to Brother. But, as in both these cases the New Regulations which supersede the old ones are quite different, it was not practically important to make the definite change in the old ones.

In the new version of the Charges we find the same thing has been done; the Wardens must be Master Masons, instead of Fellow Crafts, and the Grand Master must have been Master of a Lodge; which of course implies his having been a Warden before that, and before that again, a Master Mason in the new sense.

Taking these facts altogether, and a more minute comparison of the two editions would strengthen the case, it is hard to avoid the conviction that some material change in the Masonic system had come about in the years between 1723 and 1738. Either the Masonic status, called Fellow-Craft in the first book, was the same as that called Master Mason in the second; or else a higher grade had been introduced in the interval, to which all the rights and privileges of the other had been transferred. Whichever way it was it does seem conclusive that there were only two degrees worked in 1723; for it would seem highly improbable that the office of Master was at that time a degree, seeing that that of Warden came in between it and the Fellow Craft; the Mastership of the lodge being reserved to those who had served in the lower office, and no one has ever suggested there were any esoteric secrets attached to the Warden's chair. Still this cannot be taken as a final argument, as there is no doubt that the Past Master and the Royal Arch degrees, when they appeared later, betrayed an origin intimately connected with the office of the Master of the lodge; so that it cannot be assumed as logically certain that this qualification had nothing to do with the addition of a third degree to the Masonic system. Nevertheless, summing up the evidence afforded by the two editions of the Book of Constitutions, it certainly seems the simplest and most obvious explanation to assume, that in 1723 the first Book presupposed a rite of two grades, and that the second one, by a few very small changes of phraseology, adapted it to fit the three degree arrangement with which we are now familiar; thus avoiding any open acknowledgment that there had been any such momentous change or development.

That to avoid any such acknowledgment was practically necessary we can easily realize by imagining some similar occurrence today. It is probable that every Grand Lodge has some skeleton that must be concealed, the existence of which has been hidden in guarded and diplomatically worded Reports and buried in printed Transactions. So we can see that any such alteration or innovation in the "manner of communicating Masonic secrets," as Gould puts it, could not possibly have been openly and plainly acknowledged at the time - and the traditional cloak of Masonic secrecy was far more ample and inclusive in the eighteenth century than is regarded as necessary now.

The year 1723 is thus a critical date, and Gould evidently so regarded it. Some time after that, and before 1738, a third degree was arranged and added to the two original ones. It is immaterial for his theory when this occurred. Thus it is not a crucial point to decide whether the curious minute book of the Philo Mustcae et Architecturae Societas of 1725-

1727 does or does not refer to three degrees. Gould in his History seems to accept the view that it does, referring to

... the evidence it affords of the Fellow Craft's and Master's "parts" having been actually wrought other than in Grand Lodge, before Feb. 18, 1726 [when old Regulation XIII was amended], is of great value, both as marking the earliest date at which such ceremonies are known to have been worked, and from the inference we are justified in drawing that at the period in question there was nothing unusual in the action of the brethren concerned in these proceedings $[^{92}]$.

In this view apparently most other students have agreed with him; but he later changed his opinion, and in a very complex argument sought to show that actually only two degrees were really known to the members of the Society, and that they, like Drake, Pennell and Prichard, were the victims of Dr. Anderson's ambiguity [93].

We will now try to come to grips with this hypothesis that the innovation was founded in the first place upon misconception. But even yet something more has to be premised first. That Dr. Anderson was a Presbyterian minister is well known, as also that he was a Scotchman. In a brief biographical sketch Gould says:

There seems however some ground for supposing Dr. James Anderson was born at Aberdeen, or its vicinity, and it appears to me not improbable, that the records of the Aberdeen Lodge might reveal the fact of his having been either an initiate or affiliate of that body [94].

In the first Book of Constitutions, at page 74, there is a list of names of Grand officers, and officers of lodges, subscribed to a formal "approbation" of the work. In this we find the Masters and Wardens of each lodge in numerical order. As Master of Lodge No. 17, appears the name, "James Anderson, A.M.," and on the next line, in different type, "The Author of this Book." Now there is here a very curious coincidence. In the "Mark Book" of the Lodge of Aberdeen, a book bound with clasps that could be fastened with a small padlock, we find it recorded that it was written by a James Anderson, Glazier and Mason, and Clerk to the "Honourable Lodge" in the year 1670. Following the introductory title in which this statement occurs, is a list of the members of the lodge with their marks. This is prefaced by the following heading:

THE NAMES OF Us all who Are the Authoires of and Subscryuers of this Book In order as Followeth.

In this list the name of James Anderson appears again, thus:

James: Anderson: Glassier: and: Meaasson: and: Wreatter: of: this: book: 1. 6. 7. 0. and Maister of our lodge in the year of God 1688 and 1694,

the last evidently being written in at a later date. Gould says, in reference to this:

In a list before me of "Clerks of the Aberdeen Lodge," but which unfortunately only commences in 1709, the first name on the roll is that of J. Anderson, which is repeated year by year till 1725. At the time, therefore, when James Anderson, the Presbyterian

⁹² Gould, History, Vol. iii, p. 133.

⁹³ A.Q.C., Vol. xvi, pp. 37 and 112. Reprinted in the Collected Essays, pp. 214, 235

^{94 0}p. cit., Vol. iii, p. 44.

Minister, published the English Book of Constitutions (1723) a J. Anderson - presumably the glazier of 1670 - was the lodge clerk at Aberdeen. Now if the author of one Masonic book, and the writer of the other, were both native of Aberdeen, the similarity of name will imply relationship, and in this view of the facts, it would seem only natural that the younger historian should have benefited by the research of his senior [95].

He adds that of course the J. Anderson may not have been James Anderson, the glazier, and that Dr. Anderson may not have had anything to do with Aberdeen, but he adds that in extended researches directed to this end he had found nothing which would conflict with the supposition that the doctor was an Aberdonian. Gould's guess here has been since very considerably confirmed. Bros. Thorpe and Dr. Chetwode Crawley produced evidence a good many years ago which showed beyond doubt that Dr: Anderson claimed to be a fellow "townsman" with the Rev. William Lorimer, who he also said was a native of Aberdeen; and further that he was a graduate of Marischal College of the same place.

Quite recently, Bro. A. L. Miller, author of The Lodge of Aberdeen, No. 13, published an article in Ars Quatuor Coronatorum [96] in which he has been able to go a great deal further in regard to the antecedents of the "father of Masonic history." Indeed he has established a high degree of probability that the author of the Constitutions was not only a relative of James Anderson the glazier (and burgess of Aberdeen) but was actually his son. We cannot here discuss the evidence discovered and so skilfully presented by Bro. Miller, but we fancy it would produce conviction to most minds, although it unfortunately falls short of absolute demonstration. The records of the lodge are not complete, and though James Anderson the junior may have been made a Mason at Aberdeen, yet his name is not found in any list now remaining.

In view of this, the curious note of authorship in the Book of Constitutions of 1723 might certainly seem to be inspired by that in the Mark Book of Aberdeen. But, on the other hand, if Dr. Anderson were not a member of the Aberdeen lodge it is practically certain that he would never have even seen the book, much less known anything of its contents, as it was strictly provided in the Statutes of the lodge that it should be

... kept in our Box fast locked, except at such times it is to be taken out and carried to the place appointed when there is an Entered Prentice to be received, and we ordain all our after comers and successors in the Mason Craft to have a special care of this Book ... neither let the Clerk keep it any longer nor he is a writing on it; neither let him write upon it but when the three masters of the keys shall be present. [97]

The Lodge of Aberdeen like all the other old Scottish Lodges used the term "Fellow Craft" and Master as synonymous terms. The ampler phrase, however, "Fellow of Craft," which appears so frequently in the other Scottish records, does not seem to have been used, so far as the published excerpts show at least. This may be taken as an added item of confirmation, seeing Anderson never uses it either.

Now at last we come to what Gould evidently regarded as of the greatest importance to his theory, possibly as its keystone. This may be baldly stated thus: Dr. Anderson, through the

⁹⁵ Ibid, Vol. iii, p. 45.

⁹⁶ A.Q.C., Vol. xxxvi, p. 86.

⁹⁷ Miller, Notes on the Early History and Records of the Lodge, Aberdeen, p. 18.

medium of the Book of Constitutions assuredly, and through revision of the ritual probably (or possibly?), introduced (and, one would almost judge, deliberately and of set intention) the terminology of the Scottish lodges into English Masonry; and thus so confused the minds of the brethren that they supposed there were three degrees instead of two. We give a number of typical quotations to illustrate - for similar passages are to be found all through his work wherever he approached this subject.

Dr. Anderson was certainly a Scotsman, and to this circumstance must be attributed his introduction of many operative terms from the vocabulary of the sister kingdom into his "Book of Constitutions." Of these, one of the most common is the compound word Fellow-Craft, which is plainly of Scottish derivation. Enter'd Prentice also occurs ...

The word cowan, however, is reserved for the second edition...

Although it is tolerably clear that degrees - as we now have them - were grafted upon Scottish Masonry in the eighteenth century [i.e. from England], a puzzle in connection with their English derivation still awaits solution. It is this. The degrees in question ... viz., those of Master Mason, Fellow Craft and Entered Apprentice, bear titles which are evidently borrowed from the vocabulary of Scotland. Master Mason, it is true, was a term common to both kingdoms, but viewed in conjunction with the others the three expressions may be regarded as having been taken en bloc from the operative terminology of the northern kingdom.

The terms or expressions, Master Mason, Fellow Craft, Entered Apprentice and Cowan appear, from documentary evidence to have been in common use in Scotland, from the 1598 down to our own time.

In the introductory article on Catechisms and Revelations in the Collected Essays, written some twenty-seven years later, he returns to the same idea.

It is common knowledge that Dr. Anderson was the author of the English Books of Constitutions, 1723 and 1738 - and that in the first of these publications he introduced - into Old Regulation XIII - some Scottish terms, the appearance of which in the volume led to singular confusion and gave general offense. [98]

In the paper on the "Antiquity of Masonic Symbolism," we find the following:

The next question for our consideration is, did Dr. Anderson remodel the ancient ritual as well as the ancient laws of the Freemason? ... It is probable that he did, and that we owe to him the introduction of the Scottish operative titles, and the expansion of the system of degrees - though it is quite possible that the third degree, by which I do not mean a new ceremony but an alteration in the method of imparting the old ones, was the work of other hands. [99]

Here we have the quite definite expression of opinion that Anderson was a "ritual tinker" as well as a codifier of laws. Gould goes on in the next paragraph to repeat that in 1723 only two grades are mentioned, as in the Lodge of Aberdeen, and adds:

But about 1725 the titles of Fellow Craft and Master became disjoined, and as Dr. Anderson was absent from the deliberations of the Grand Lodge of England between June,

⁹⁸ Gould, Essays, p. xx.

⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 139.

1725, and June, 1731, it is perhaps a fair inference that he was not concerned in the alteration.

We see that the imported phrases mentioned come down to three. "Cowan" is too late to affect the argument, not appearing till 1738, and as Master Mason admittedly was not new there are really only two left. Though we may give some weight to the argument that the three terms were introduced en bloc, as Gould puts it, nevertheless the fact remains that there was actually only two new ones. Rather a slight innovation to create such "general offense" as to cause Anderson's retirement from Grand Lodge for six years. There must have been more than this, and it seems far more probable that the offence was given, as we have previously suggested, first by the printing and publishing the Constitutions, and second by the wholesale way in which they had been edited, digested and altered.

PART 9

BEFORE commenting on Gould's argument as a whole that the evolution of the original primitive two degree system into our present one of three degrees, one more quotation must be given, that in some ways is very illuminating, though perhaps not exactly in the way the author intended it.

... I have expressed my belief that Anderson only joined the English Craft in 1721, but whatever the period may have been, his opportunities of grafting the nomenclature of one Masonic system upon that of another only commenced in the latter part of that year, and lasted barely six months, as his manuscript Constitutions were ordered to be printed March 25 1722. He was, therefore, debarred from borrowing as largely as he must have wished judging from his fuller work of 1738 from the operative phraseology of the Northern Kingdom [100].

This really seems like building a pyramid with its apex down! The second edition contained one extra Scottish term, the word Cowan." It is true that Gould brings up in support like a troop of camp followers camouflaged as reserves the mention in the 1738 book of the old custom of meetings held

... early in the Morning on the Tops of Hills, especially on St. John Evangelist's Day ... according to the tradition of the old Scots Masons, particularly those of the antient lodges of Killwinning, Sterling, Aberdeen, etc. [101]

This, he seems to think, may have given rise to like statements which appear in most of the early printed exposures. But really this is putting the cart before the horse! The paragraph in question did not appear until 1738, and at least four such "exposures," three of which are quite distinct and characteristic in their contents [102], had been published before 1738, or rather before 1731, and they all contain closely analogous statements. The more reasonable interpretation is surely that we have here a genuine operative tradition, current equally in England and in Scotland.

At the critical date of 1723 the sum total of the Scottish importations discoverable by Gould is actually two compound titles, Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft, of which compounds the chief element in each case was admittedly known and familiar in England, so that it is only the addition of the qualifying terms, "entered" in the one case and "Craft" in the other, that can be claimed as new. It would seem that a far more natural, and perfectly adequate explanation (granting that the terms were an importation) is that Anderson, who wrote calamo currents and who evidently never stopped to verify quotations but just put down things as he remembered them, simply used the phraseology

¹⁰⁰Gould, History, Vol. iii, p. 111.

¹⁰¹Ibid, Vol. iii, p. 45.

¹⁰²These are the Mason's Examination published in the Flying Post of April 13, 1723, the Grand Mystery of Freemasons Discovered, published in 1725. These two Gould reproduces in the Appendix of his History, Vol. iv, p. 281. On Aug. 16, 1730 the Daily Journal published the Mystery of Freemasons, the catechism in which is a slightly variant version from that of the Examination. It was reproduced by Franklin in the Pennsylvania Gazette in the December following. In October Prichard's Masonry Dissected appeared. Besides these we really should add the Sloane MS. No. 3329 as no authority gives it so late a date as 1738. The Trinity College and Chetwode Crawley MSS. might be also adduced if it were not that they may be of Scottish origin

that was familiar to him as a Scottish Mason, with not the least idea or intention of supplanting or altering that which was in use in London, or even realizing that he was using terms that might be unfamiliar to his English brethren. If so, it would follow that in his mind Entered Apprentice was the same thing as Apprentice, Master Mason as Master, and Fellow Craft as Fellow, and conversely that his English readers understood what he intended as well as he did himself.

First of all, Gould's argument rests on the supposition that these terms really were not known in England before Anderson's work was published. Here we are once more presented with a negative argument, and one resting on very slender evidence. There are, roughly speaking, the Old Charges, the references of Ashmole and Randle Holme, and the accounts of Plot and Aubrey. The "Old Charges" hardly tell us anything, for they were copied from older exemplars and would not have been changed even if current terminology had been modified in this regard. And for proof of this we have only to go to Scotland itself, where we find copies of the old MS. Constitutions in which the terms Fellow and Apprentice are found without qualifying additions. The copy that was used in the Lodge of Aberdeen, which (if Bro. Miller's suggestion be accepted) was copied by Dr. Anderson's father, may be taken as a peculiarly appropriate example. It contains the normal phraseology, Fellow, Master and Apprentice, though the Statutes of the lodge speak of Master Masons, Entered Prentices and Fellowcraft.

Thus it would certainly appear that Scottish Masons must have quite understood the English terminology, and it seems pertinent to ask why English Masons should misunderstand that of Scotland; at least we can rule out the evidence of Old Charges as being quite irrelevant to this particular question. We thus have only four brief mentions, which, were they more conclusive than they are, could not possibly prove, being all earlier than the 18th century, that London Masons were ignorant of these compound terms in 1720, or even 1700. We are not suggesting that they were known, but merely pointing out the fact that the evidence adduced is altogether inadequate to prove such a sweeping negative as Gould required for his argument.

It is to be noted, as Gould points out in more than one place, that the earliest copies of the Old Catechisms, both printed and in manuscript, contain some mention of these two "scotticisms." The curious and rather exasperating thing here is that none of the manuscripts can be dated with any certainty before 1723, while all the printed versions extant are later than the date of publication of the Book of Constitutions. We have references to a catechism printed before 1723, but no copy of it exists so far as is known. Should it turn up some day, and prove to be (as we think very probable) an earlier publication of the document printed in 1723 under the title of the "Mason's Examination" (and many times thereafter under other titles) it might settle the question definitely as against Gould. Or on the other hand it might lend him strong support; though even then not to the point of absolute conclusiveness. But that this should happen is only a pious hope.

As the matter stands, the evidence of the Catechisms is tied up with the hypothesis we are considering in a very peculiar way. They do not lend it any logical support, nor do they militate against it. If on other grounds we agree with Gould that Anderson imported these phrases, then it is likely that the compilers or publishers of these effusions borrowed from him. If we doubt whether Gould is right and suppose the terms were not wholly unknown, then their appearance here will confirm our doubt. They fit either hypothesis equally well.

The case of Sloane MS. 3329 and the Trinity College and Chetwode Crawley MSS. is still more annoying [103]. They have no date. From appearance, paper, handwriting and the other criteria by which experts judge the age of documents, they are all of about the critical period. They may be earlier, they may be later. It is equally obvious that they, like the printed versions, give no certain indication. All three of them have a strongly Scottish character, over and above the use of the terms "Entered Prentice" and "Fellow Craft," or "fellow craftsman," and one is apparently closely linked up with the usages of the old Haughfoot Lodge. Gould was so obsessed with the idea that the Scottish Craft knew nothing but the "Mason word," that he had to put on one side as "exceptional" the indications plainly pointing to more than this which appear in the records of Haughfoot and Dunblane, and which are confirmed, and elucidated to some extent, by these MSS. And if the two degree system was known in Scotland as well as in England before 1723 or earlier, then the theory of misunderstanding will become still more incredible. But we will have to discuss these documents more fully later on and for the present we may leave them on one side.

¹⁰³The Trinity College has on it the following endorsement, "Freemasonry, Feb. 1711" but this is in a different hand from the contents of the MS. itself, and as we have no idea who made it or when, or what grounds there were for the statement it is impossible to receive it as evidence.

Was Anderson Misunderstood?

Let us admit, for the sake of argument, that these two phrases were not known in England, and we think it is quite probable they were at least not usual or familiar; the question then arises, were they so new and unintelligible as to cause confusion in the minds of the Masonic readers of the Book of Constitutions?

There surely could have been none in regard to the Apprentice. For if, in England, he was not "entered," he was "admitted." The difference in meaning is too slight for there to have been any doubt in anyone's mind what was intended. The whole burden of the alleged misunderstanding must rest on the term Fellow Craft.

If, as seems certain the sequence in England was Apprentice, Master (of his Craft) and Fellow (the Mason being accepted as a Fellow of the Fraternity because he had become master of his trade) it would seem that it would have taken truly preternatural stupidity to suppose that Master Mason and Fellow Craft meant something different. The old sequence was not changed in Regulation XIII, and in the fourth Charge the term Master obviously means Master of the Lodge the two meanings one would suppose, were obvious enough, and usual enough, to make misunderstanding very improbable. The two uses of the term Master were not peculiar to the Masons, they were general; and not only that, they have continued down to the present time. We all understand at once the difference between a master- workman, a man proficient in his trade, and the master, "boss," or employer. But we may here quote a contemporary writer, Martin Clare [104]. In the Defense of Masonry, written in reply to Prichard's Masonry Dissected, he says:

There are a MASTER, two Wardens and a number of Assistants, to make what the Dissector may call (if he pleases) a Perfect Lodge in the City Companies. There is the Degree of Enter'd Apprentice, Master of his Trade, or Fellow Craft and Master, or the Master of the Company [105].

This seems to indicate that seven years later there was no confusion in Clare's mind about the equivalence of the old English and the Scottish terms; and as the Defense was widely circulated, and was reprinted as an appendix to the second Book of Constitutions it would further seem to show that there was not much room for misapprehension elsewhere; neither does Clare's language betray any objection to the compound terms as Gould's argument would seem to require [106].

Gould bases his belief that misunderstanding did exist chiefly on the appearance of Prichard's three degree system, but he supports it also by two other items of evidence. The first is the apparent reference to three degrees by Francis Drake, F. R. S., in his speech to the assembled Fraternity at York on the Festival of St. John's Day, 1726 [107]. The passage in question follows a lengthy quotation from Addison. Drake then goes on to say:

From what he [Addison] has said, the great Antiquity of the Art of Building or Masonry may be easily deduced; for without running up to Seth's Pillars or the Tower of Babel for proofs the Temple - of Belus alone, or the Walls of Babylon ... are sufficient testimonies,

¹⁰⁴A. Q. C., Vol. iv, p. 33; Vol. 28, p. 80.

¹⁰⁵Anderson's New Book of Constitutions 1738, p. 217, Reproduced in Q. C. A., Vol. vii. 106For Gould's argument on this point the Concise History, p. 400, and Essays, p. 223, may be consulted. 107Hughan's Masonic Sketches and Reprints (1871), p. 112.

or at least give great Reason to conjecture, that three parts in four of the whole Earth might then be divided into E-P-F-C & M-M.

We quite frankly do not have any clear idea what this means. It may be that Drake had mistaken Dr. Anderson to speak of three grades in London and did not wish to admit any fewer in York; it may be he first learned of the term Fellow Craft in the 1723 Book of Constitutions, and that Masons in the North of England had no previous knowledge of its use in Scotland; it may be that they were familiar with the terms and used them in the old way; but what actually may be properly deduced from it as it stands we do not even wish to guess. Gould held that there was but one ceremony employed at York; basing that opinion on the minutes, which speak only of candidates being "admitted and sworn." But then what did the three titles mean to Drake and those who listened to him ranks merely? Or Degrees?

Gould says:

But, as it appears to myself, Drake had evidently constructed an imaginary tri-gradal system, from a mis-reading of James Anderson's ambiguous expressions in O. R. XIII.

But why should the "Apprentices," "Masters" and "Fellow Craft" of the 1723 Regulation lead to such an imaginary construction when the "Apprentices", "Masters" and "Fellows" of the Old Charges, with which Drake must have been familiar, had not done so? The natural thing would be to interpret the new in the light of the old, and we have really nothing in the obscure reference to show that Drake, if he did borrow his terms, understood them in any other sense than Anderson in 1723 had intended them.

Irish Usage In 1730

The next piece of evidence seems much stronger. In our opinion it is the one really relevant fact he offers. In Pennell's Constitutions, virtually an edition of Anderson, published in Dublin before the end of August, 1730 (that is a little earlier than Prichard's work) we find the following addition to Charge IV [108]:

No Master should take an Apprentice unless ... [he is physically qualified and so on, and thus not incapable] ... Of being made a Brother and a Fellow Craft, and in due time a Master; and when quailfy'd, he may arrive to the Honour of being Warden, then Master of a Lodge, etc.

When this is compared with Anderson it certainly does give the strong impression that three degrees are intended. But seeing that only a month or two later Prichard presents us with a complete sketch of a trigradal system, it will depend on our opinion of the origin of that work what significance we give to this. The curious thing is that in 1734-1735 William Smith published in London and Dublin A Pocket Companion for Freemasons, virtually a book of Constitutions, having official approval of the Grand Lodge of Ireland, which the 1730 work did not have. This follows Pennell very closely, but it omits the pregnant words "and in due time a Master."

This raises a number of questions. Was the omission intentional? If so did it mean that more than two degrees were unknown in Ireland? Or was the Grand Lodge of Ireland seeking to suppress a three degree arrangement introduced unofficially from England, and trying to maintain the ancient system? It is impossible to say without more evidence. So far, however, as Gould's theory goes, Pennell's work is overshadowed by Prichard's Masonry Dissected, which followed it so closely.

In a number of different places, Gould has intimated his theory of how the change was effected, as for example, in the History he says [109]:

It is probable that about this period [1724-25] the existing degrees were remodelled, and the titles of Fellow Craft and Master disjoined the latter becoming the degree of Master Mason, and the former virtually denoting a new degree, though its essentials were merely composed of a severed portion of the ceremonial hitherto observed at the entry of an apprentice.

This opinion (with which, as it is here stated, we fully agree) is based on a comparison of Prichard with the other versions of the Old Catechisms. The process is by no means fully complete in Prichard, but it does show us a second degree, called the Fellow Craft's Part, which is not so much a severed portion, but a variant version of part of the old Mason's Examination or Catechism. It is a separate degree almost entirely in virtue of having a name and being set apart, rather than in its content; indeed if might almost be called a doublet of the first. However, in spite of its embryonic form it may be taken as a sketch of what later became the normal type.

¹⁰⁸Gould, Essays, p. 218. Pennell's work was reproduced by Dr. Chetwode Crawley in Caementaria Hibernica, Vol. i.

¹⁰⁹History, Vol. iii, p. 114.

Gould adduces another fact to support his contention that in 1723 the Grand Lodge recognized only two degrees. A French lodge was constituted in London in August of that year, by the Earl of Strathmore, and 'le Maitre, les Surveillants, les Compagnons et les Apprentifs [The Master, the Wardens, the Fellows and the Apprentices] were alone particularized. He goes on. [110]

Soon after 1730, indeed a system of three degrees crept into use, of which the proximate cause appears to have been the influence exercised both directly and indirectly by the spurious ritual of Samuel Prichard. But there is nothing from which we may infer that a division of the old "Apprentice Part" into two moieties each forming a distinct step or degree had been approved by the Grand Lodge prior to the publication of the New Book of Constitutions in 1738.

In an article in the Northern Freemason in 1906 he recapitulated his position [111]. Referring briefly to the fact that

In Scotland, both before and long after the year 1723, the expressions "Fellow Craft" and "Master" were terms of indifferent application, meaning one and the same thing...

he goes on to repeat the assertion, which while possible (and even probable) is not as, we have said, demonstrated, that the term "Fellow Craft" was unknown in England until Anderson imported it. He then says:

The combined use, therefore, of the terms Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master in the XIIIth of the "General Regulations" (1723) gave rise to the singular hallucination that they denoted three distinct and separate degrees which were then recognized by the Grand Lodge.

And then after running over the earliest allusions to three separate degrees, that we have already discussed, down to Pennell's Constitutions, he adds:

... After this the delusion assumed such proportions that yielding to the popular clamor, the two degrees inherited and hitherto only recognized by the Grand Lodge of England were by the bisection of the Apprentice part declared not only to be, but to have been, THREE.

For a historian this seems to us a very unguarded statement. Granting, as we are certainly willing to do, that the change might have been made in the way he asserts; it is going entirely beyond any evidence adduced by himself, or known to us, to say the Grand Lodge made any such declaration unless he means no more than the official approval, or acquiescence, in the changes made by Anderson in his New Book of 1738. If this was his meaning, it seems so over-emphatic as to be very misleading to any reader who has not been able to weigh all the evidence for himself.

¹¹⁰Essays, p. 218 111Ibid, p. 269.

DID THE GRAND LODGE OPPOSE THE NEW SYSTEM?

He had been more cautious in 1903. In a paper read to the Quatuor Coronati Lodge, he said [112]:

The precise circumstances under which an expansion of the original system of degrees was authorized, or perhaps it would be better to say regulated, by the earliest of Grand Lodges, have not been recorded, but there is a sufficiency of evidence from which the broad facts of the ease become distinguishable. The governing body of English Masonry evidently tried to combat the new doctrine of which Samuel Prichard was the high priest by having the "Discourse" of Martin Clare read in the lodges and doubtless in other ways. But finding the novelty had taken root and there can be no doubt that the seed from which Masonry Dissected ultimately germinated, had been sown by Anderson ... the Grand Lodge, it is more than probable, felt bound to regulate a movement it was unable to suppress. Three steps therefore, were declared. to exist in the Constitutions of 1738 and the order of their precedence was determined by the Grand Officers, in the manner which appeared to them in the greatest harmony with the ancient and Symbolic traditions of the Craft.

We see that here, perhaps because addressing a more critical audience, he inserts a qualification, "it is more than probable" the Grand Lodge felt bound to act. It seems to us that Anderson's emendations in the New Book are rather a recognition or an adaptation of formula to a fait accompli; but perhaps this is all Gould meant. If by his Discourse, reference is made to the Defence of Martin Clare we presume the passage that we quoted above is what Gould had in mind as the reason for the Grand Lodge having it read in the lodges [113]. But there is so much more of value in Clare's tract that it is hard to pick on one brief, and not especially striking paragraph, and say that that was pre-eminently the thing it was desired to disseminate. And finally, where is there the least shadow of an indication that "the Grand Officers" took counsel together on the subject? It is all pure inference, based in Gould's mind on another part of his general hypothesis which we will shortly have to consider, respecting the "order in which the two moities" of the Apprentices part were given. We now continue the quotation:

The second edition of the Constitutions, like the first, was the cause of serious trouble in the lodges, and in each ease the discontent appears to have been at its height about a year after the publication of the work. In 1739, the rearrangement of the degrees gave offense, not only to brethren who were working in the old way, i.e., according to the system of two degrees as existing prior to and after 1717; but also to all those practicing three ceremonies, who followed the method of conferring them as laid down in Prichard's Spurious Ritual of 1730. There were other causes which tended to widen the breach between the Masons who were submissive and those who were disobedient to the mandates of the Grand Lodge. The principal of these was a second tampering with the "Mason's Creed," which, at a later period, caused a further divergence of procedure between the two parties into which English Freemasons ultimately became separated.

¹¹²Ibid, p. 223.

¹¹³We judge that it is. see Concise Hist., pp. 400-401. Compare also Wonnacott, A. Q. C., Vol. xxviii, p. 80. 114Compare also the Concise History, p. 417.

The two parties are the rival Grand Lodges of "Moderns" and "Antients," and the "Mason's Creed" is, we suppose, the first charge, "Concerning God and Religion," which was somewhat modified in the New Book; but while those lodges which continued to work only two degrees may have objected to the innovation, no evidence whatever has been brought to light, in such minutes as have survived, to show either that they rebelled on this account, or that the Grand Lodge sought, for the sake of uniformity, or any other reason, to force them to do their work in three stages instead of two. It may have been so, but there is absolutely nothing to show it.

PART 10

THAT any body of Masons were so much influenced by Prichard's six-penny pamphlet that they straightway gave up their old customs to follow his imaginings seems so inherently improbable that only the most definite evidence could convince us of it. However, Gould, in making this suggestion has left himself a loophole. He may be interpreted, if we read between the lines, as meaning no more than that Prichard's work represents a procedure that was then being followed in some quarters, which the Grand Lodge, or the Grand Lodge officers and their circle, judged to be not in accord with the "ancient and symbolic traditions of the Craft."

We think that this point was not really an essential part of the theory of a misunderstanding. It was based in Gould's mind, so it appears to us, upon his dislike for the "Ancients." Previous to the Union in 1813, the "Moderns" changed certain features of their ritual and thus came to differ, not only from the "Ancients," but also from the Grand Lodges of Ireland and Scotland, on the grounds of which the two latter bodies had for many years refused them recognition while maintaining fraternal intercourse with the Ancients a fact that Gould very much minimized and glossed over. [115] He insisted that the original Grand Lodge had never made any changes with the single exception of the one we have been considering the unwilling sanction of the division of the Apprentice's part into Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft. He puts this very strongly in his smaller History in commenting on the negotiations that preceded the Union. [116]

... the virtual adoption of the method of working among the "Ancients" which has been relied upon as affording decisive proof of the "Moderns" having finally returned to the old ways I regard myself from an entirely different aspect, and consider that it points with certainty to "an alteration" for the first and only time, "in its established forms," by the earliest of Grand Lodges.

This is explicit. According to him the yielding of the senior Grand Lodge in matters of ritual was a surrender to innovations introduced by the "Ancients" at least so far as concerned England from Ireland.

We must take this as representing his final and mature opinion, though earlier utterances seem to conflict with it. As for example in the larger and earlier work we find

These alterations [the expansion of the Apprentice's Part into our first and second degrees] if I am right in my supposition were not effected in a day. Indeed it is possible that a taste for "meddling with the ritual," having been acquired, lasted longer than has been commonly supposed - and the variations made in the "established forms," which was one of the articles in the heavy indictment drawn up by the seceding against the Regular Masons, may have been but a further manifestation of the passion for innovation which was evinced by the Grand Lodge of England during the first decade of its existence. [117]

And later still, we are inclined to think.

¹¹⁵Gould History, Vol. iii, p. 248, cf. Essays, p. 229.

¹¹⁶ Gould Concise History, p. 441. Also A. Q. C., Vol. x, p. 138.

¹¹⁷Hist., Vol iii, p. 114.

In the same volume, referring to the changes made by the Moderns to conform with the usage of the Ancients just before the Union, he says:

This was virtually a return to the old practice, and it will be sufficient to remark, that with the exception of the opportunities selected under the two systems for the communication of secrets, there appears to have been no real difference between the procedure (or ceremonial) of the two fraternities. [118]

With the last statement we are unable to agree, unless the term "real" be understood in an exceedingly general (not to say vague) sense. But it does seem that here he did still accept the received assertion that the Moderns had made deliberate changes [119] with a view to excluding the members of lodges which were not in their obedience. If so, he later modified his opinion, and we could wish that he had given his readers warning of the fact.

It will be necessary now to show as briefly as possible how he justified his later contention, in the face, not only of the fact that it was regarded as a matter of general knowledge in the later part of the eighteenth century, but also in view of the formal admission by the Grand Lodge of the Moderns in a resolution passed at the Quarterly Communication of April 12, 1809.

That this Grand Lodge do agree ... that it is not necessary any longer to continue in Force those measures which were resorted to in or about the year 1736, respecting irregular Masons, and do therefore enjoin the several Lodges to revert to the Ancient Land Marks of the Society. [120]

He calls this "a lamentable exhibition of weakness and ignorance of history." He quotes Bro. Sadler on an earlier page in support of his view:

To adopt the words of Mr. Henry Sadler, "I am fully convinced that at this period the leaders of the rival Grand Lodges really knew very little of each others origin and antecedents." It would, indeed, be quite possible to show, from their own writings, not merely a sufficiency but an affluence of proof, that neither Dermott nor Preston was even superficially acquainted with the history of English Freemasonry between the years 1717 and 1751. [121]

This is undoubtedly true, but it does not follow that a tradition to the effect that a deliberate change had been made for the purpose specified, was without foundation in fact. That still remains an open question.

Gould's argument may be summarized thus. Beginning with the position, already sufficiently defined, that in England Masonry emerges into history as a two degree system, but that in Scotland it contained, on the esoteric or speculative side, only the "Mason Word" (which, as we have said, he was apparently inclined to take very literally as implying merely a single password) it followed that in his opinion when the London Grand Lodge acquiesced in the division of the first grade into two, it was fully competent to decide how the division should be made. We must ask our readers here to bear in mind that

¹¹⁸Ibid., Vol iii, p. 252.

¹¹⁹At least it is plausible that Dr. Desaguliers advocated something of the kind in 1730. Gould, op. cit., Vol. iii, p. 138.

¹²⁰Hist., Vol. iii, p. 250- Concise Hist., p. 441.

¹²¹Ibid., p. 433.

the most prominent and most definite charge made against the Moderns was that they had transposed certain words. Gould argues that whatever arrangement was followed by the Moderns was the one that was made when the present second degree was separated from the first, and whatever the merits of that fundamental innovation might be it was within the competence of the Grand Lodge to regulate it, and that this being the original arrangement, and if a different one was improper, then it was the other Grand Lodges that were at fault. That of the Ancients, and also those of Scotland and Ireland which agreed with them. [122]

The argument is a very plausible one, but its weakness lies in the impossibility of adequately accounting for the change being made in Scotland and Ireland. If Scotland got the degree system from England, as he holds, why did it twist things round in adopting it? He suggests, in the case of Ireland, that it had the same right that the Grand Lodge of England had to divide the original first degree as it chose, and suggests that the Irish brethren were misled by Prichard. The Ancients probably got their ritual from Ireland, at least we may so think if we accept Sadler's thesis that they were in the first place chiefly Irish immigrants to London. Besides this we have Gould's own assertion (whatever it may be worth) that in 1739 there were discontented lodges following Prichard's arrangement. This, however, he ignores in the present connection. It seems therefore that his hypothesis raises a dozen difficulties in order to solve one. On the other hand he did not consider the possibility that there might have been a traditional sequence in the old Apprentice's Part, which was in itself the basis of the original division. If so, then from the standpoint of conservatism it would not be justifiable to alter it. There is evidence overlooked by Gould that this was the case. To this we shall have to come later on.

We have scarcely touched upon his discussion of the vestiges of the old ritual practice as his treatment of these seems to be merely auxiliary to his main argument. One point remains which we find still rather obscure, and that is just what he meant by insisting the "essentials" of the ancient symbolic system were the same as those we have today? He intimated indeed that he could not speak more precisely. However in his large History [123] he gives the impression that he believed the legend of the Builder to have been incorporated between 1723 and 1729, while in his paper on the Antiquity of Masonic Symbolisms he says what seems to be the exact reverse of this.

Gould bulks very largely in the discussion of this problem, not only because of his extensive acquaintance with the facts concerning it, but also from the sheer bulk of what he has written, and because, owing to the comparative accessibility of his two Histories and the Collected Essays his views are perhaps more widely known than those of any other Masonic writer, with the possible exception of Albert Mackey.

We have attempted to show that whatever degree of credence may be given to his opinions, his arguments are not logically conclusive. It is possible, it may even be probable, that no solution of the puzzle can ever be discovered which will compel assent; but it is something to know wherein certainty has not been reached. The facts themselves, as our readers by now must fully realize, are complex and obscure, and it is impossible to adequately discuss them without entering into a complex argument. We hope that in this case we have not made Gould's obscurity still greater in our attempt to elucidate his position.

¹²²Ibid, pp. 403 and 408. Also Essays, pp. 228 and 232. 123Hist., Vol. iii, pp. 117-119.

With Gould what may be called the classical period of the discussion comes to an end. It seemed that, for the time being at least, all the evidence available had been brought forward and debated from every point of view, and that there was no more to do than to give judgment upon the argument. Masonic students have very generally accepted the two degree hypothesis; and though there is, as we have seen, plenty of room for divergence of opinion within those limits, yet probably a majority have taken it in the same sense as Gould and Speth; that the original second grade was equivalent to our third, and that our second has been manufactured or evolved out of part of the original first.

Thus the focus of interest shifted to the origin of the third degree and its relationship to the Royal Arch. These intensely interesting problems fall outside the limits that, for purely practical reasons, it has been necessary to lay down although seeing they are closely, one might say organically, connected, it will be impossible to avoid some mention of them, if the subject is to be shown in its true relations.

For our present purpose, therefore, we will briefly mention such contributions to the subject of the evolution of the Masonic ritual, the origin of the Royal Arch and cognate topics, so far as they bear upon the particular object of this survey.

Bro. Roderick H. Baxter read a paper before the Manchester Association for Masonic Research in 1909, on the "Old Charges," in which he briefly touched upon the question of their ritual use in early Masonic lodges. [124] Eight years later he took up an extension of this subject before the Humber Installed Masters Lodge, under the head of "The Old Charges and the Ritual," and in the following year gave substantially the same paper before Quatuor Coronati Lodge. [125] In this he summarized Speth's arguments on the subject of degrees and indicated his own adhesion to his conclusions. He showed also a number of striking parallels between passages in the MS. Charges and certain present day ritual formulas, chiefly of a hortatory character. As against the doubt expressed by Gould, whether these MSS, were used in the eighteenth century lodges, he advanced the strong, though indirect, argument, that Anderson's Constitutions were to take the place of the old manuscript charges, and that it was directed that they should be read at the making of Masons. Whether this was ever actually done or not we do not know, and it is pretty certain that if it was done it very soon dropped out of use. But it is a fair inference that this direction was not a new thing, that in this too the printed book was intended to take the place of the older and more concise documents. This would also account for the evidences of borrowing collected by Bro. Baxter. The position might be stated thus: There was a definite recollection that the Old Charges and the introductory legend had formed part of the ritual. They became obsolete with the advent of the printed book. The latter, if for no other reason, on account of its impossible length, was never used in this way, or if used was soon disused, and so, in compensation, the old MSS, were used as a quarry by ritualists in search of material for exhortations, eulogiums, moralizings, and so on. Just as, much later, Webb used Preston's Illustrations without regard to the original place and purpose of his material. It is obvious that this kind of ritual expansion and embellishment has no direct bearing on the question of origins.

¹²⁴Trans. Man. Ass'n, 1909-10, p. 22. 125A. Q. C., Vol. xxxi p. 33.

In another paper before the Manchester Association Bro. Baxter discussed the Chetwode Crawley MS. [126] and its bearing upon the "two degree" hypothesis. This MS. seems to shed a good deal of light upon the well known "Haughfoot minute," and Baxter notes Hughan's admission in regard to it, that it did give real support to the theory of an original system of two grades. A rather grudging admission it must be said. [127] Bro. Baxter however expresses the opinion that the argument in favour of two degrees is conclusive, the Chetwode Crawley MS. being an additional and convincing piece of evidence. But it must be remembered that it is possible to hold that there were two original degrees, and vet to suppose the third degree to be a modern invention. As we saw in the discussion of Speth's argument, Bro. J. Ramsden Riley was of this opinion [128], as some other students still appear to be also. Bro. Baxter, however, agrees in this with Gould, and in 1914 in a paper read before the Humber Installed Master's Lodge, he undertook to prove the antiquity of our Third Degree. [129] In the course of his argument he referred, as others have done also, to the various legends of Masonic tragedies; as those of Roslin, Gloucester, Cologne, etc., and also to the folk tragi-comedy embodied in the Mummer's play. In this, however, we must not follow him now.

The late Bro. E. L. Hawkins read a paper [130] in Quatuor Coronati Lodge on the Evolution of the Masonic Rituals He however only dealt in this with the period ending with 1716. He covered in this very much the same ground that we have already traversed but in the discussion Bro. Dring made a point that had not definitely been brought out before and that was that certain of the MS. Constitutions, the Watson and Heade versions being specially mentioned,

... show a distinction between being made a Mason and a Fellow being received and allowed. According to those versions it was on the latter occasion (when the Fellow was received and allowed) that the Charges might be read to him. My view is that one can only form personal conclusions or opinions as to what the procedure really was. [131]

And he went on to say that the differences and discrepancies were due to the transition from the Operative to the Speculative regime proceeding at different rates in different places. [132]

¹²⁶Trans. Man. Ass'n 1910-11.

¹²⁷The point has been touched on in a previous note. BUILDER, Aug., 1928, p. 248. The reference is to Hughan's Origin of the English Rite, p. 23.

¹²⁸BUILDER, Oct., 1928, p. 299.

¹²⁹Trans. Humber Installed Masters Lodge, 1912-1916, p. 635.

¹³⁰A. Q. C., Vol. xxvi, p. 6.

¹³¹Ibid.; p. 19.

¹³²The William Watson MS., Q. C. A., Vol. iii, has the following passage which succeeds the account of the great Assembly at York under Edwin. "In England right worshipful masters & fellowes yt been of divers Semblies and congregations with ye Lords of this Realme hath ordained & made charges by their best advise yt all manner of men yt shall be made & allowed Masons, must be sworne upon a booke to keep the same in all yt they may to ye uttermost of their power, & alsoe they have been ordained yt when any ffellow shall be received & allowed yt these charges might be read unto him, & he to take his charges, and these charges haue been seen & perused by our late Soveraigne Lord King Henry ye sixth & ye Lords of ye Honourable Councell, and they have allowed them well & said they were right good & reasonable to be holden..."

In 1917 Bro. Redfern Kelley [133] discussing the origin of the Royal Arch, intimated his acceptance of the single initiation theory, with second, third and fourth degrees added in succession, but without advancing any new arguments. He however did not take it in exactly the same sense as Hughan and Mackey and the other brethren of their school, as the following passage shows:

In Ancient Craft Freemasonry there would appear to have existed from time immemorial, so to speak, a certain essential and well recognized archaic legend; and in connection with that legend a peculiar secret, which may be regarded as being one of the ancient esoteric landmarks of the Order, primitively considered - that this particular esoteric landmark, the M... W... [presumably these letters stand for "Mason Word"], was recognized under the ancient "Operative" system and subsequently under the combined "Operative and Speculative" systems; and as well under the more recent and improved purely "Speculative" system which obtained since the year 1717; and that, as a "Prime Secret," it was invariably communicated to all candidates indiscriminately, on their admission into the Order under the primitive one degree Ritual of the Craft, as acknowledged and practiced in, and prior to, the latter year [1717] irrespective of any distinction of class either of "Apprentice," "Fellow of the Craft," or "Master" of the Guild or of the Lodge. [134]

In other words, that all the essentials of our three degrees were included in the primitive ritual of initiation. It will be remembered that Bro. Sydney Klein had suggested a very similar theory in the discussion of Speth's paper. [135] Bro. Klein, however, begins with the second degree, that is, he supposes the original initiation to have taken place at the end of the Apprentice's term of servitude, when he was made free of the Craft.

Bro. R. J. Meekren, in an article published in the Tyler-Keystone, March and April, 1918, had also developed at some length a similar theory, more like Bro. Kelley's than that of Bro. Klein. It was, however, written with insufficient information, and is another example of the difficulty would-be students so often experience in gaining access to the results of the investigations made by others. A further suggestion was made in this article that the first of the Masonic degrees to be put third in the series was not the "Master Mason" but that of "Past" or "Passed Master," and that from this as a germ the Capitular Degrees eventually were developed, i.e., the various Excellent Masterships and the Royal Arch. This, as will be remembered, was not wholly unanticipated. Bro. Upton, for example, suggested something like it. [136]

The paper by Bro. Kelley referred to above was rather severely criticized by the other members of Quatuor Coronati Lodge; chiefly on account of his acceptance of the "single initiation" hypothesis, but partly on other grounds which do not concern us here.

Bro. J. E. S. Tuckett is the next student who calls for some notice in this connection. His work has dealt more with the origins of the additional degrees, but among his postulates for these researches is this:

¹³³A.Q.C., Vol. xxx. D. 7. "The Advent of Royal Arch Masonry.

¹³⁴Ibid., p. 13.

¹³⁵BUILDER, Oct., 1928, p. 299; A. Q. C., Vol. xi, p. 61.

¹³⁶BUILDER Oct., 1928 p. 301 and others have reverted to it since. We hope to explore it more fully later on.

That before 1717 Freemasonry possessed a Store of Legend, Tradition and Symbolism of wide extent. That from 1717 the Grand Lodge selecting a portion only of the Store, gradually evolved a Rite consisting of E.A., F.C., M.M., and R.A. That the restriction of the terms "pure," "Ancient," and (in a certain sense) "Craft" to the degrees included in this Rite is arbitrary, and due solely to the accident of selection by the Grand Lodge. [137]

We believe that there is a good deal to be said for this, though we think too much emphasis is laid on the "selection," which gives the impression that it was a deliberate and conscious process. Our own feeling is that the Grand Lodge followed, rather than led, in the matter; and even that it may have been reluctantly dragged into accepting the evolving expansions of the ritual that took place in the formative period, 1717 - 1738.

Bro. Tuckett accepts two original degrees under the names of "Enter'd Mason or Apprentice" and "Enter'd Fellow or Master," and suggested that they were recast [138], the present third degree being "a dramatic representation of the older 'Master's Part." Which seems to imply that the latter consisted chiefly of the communication of an item of legendary history. But some years later [139] he summed up his views as follows:

The old two degrees were substantially the same as our present day First and Second.

"The Master's Part" was not a degree but a ceremony - with secrets, conferred upon but few. This was elevated to the status of a recognized degree our present Third Degree for which all Brethren in possession of the other two were eligible.

This would seem to be closely allied to the theory that the third degree was originally for Masters of Lodges (or earlier still, of employers) although this is not definitely brought out. Otherwise the theory is like that of Bro. J. Ramsden Riley. [140] But what a ceremony-with-secrets if not a degree? We are inclined to think that such a conception as this would only be possible in England, where the brethren are "teethed" on the eminently practical but absurdly illogical compromise of 1813. [141]

By this, for the purpose of English Masonic Constitutional Law the term "Degree" is defined as applicable only to the three specifically mentioned, and to nothing else. Whatever propriety this usage may have in its limited legal sphere, it must be said that from the etymological point of view it is artificially restricted, and for the historian's purposes highly inconvenient; and more than that, it tends to misunderstanding and confusion of thought. It is however useless to quarrel over words. To those who use the term in this restricted sense we submit the following schema:

Class: Ritual-unit

Sub-class: (a) Degree. (b) Ceremony-with-secrets.

We desire, though, to make it quite clear that we have used, and intend to continue to use (on the mere ground of convenience) the word "degree" for the class, amending the classification thus:

¹³⁷A. Q. C., Vol. xxxii, p. 5.

¹³⁸Trans. Man. Ass'n, 1921 1922, p. 78.

¹³⁹Trans. Dorset Masters Lodge, 1926-1927, p. 42.

¹⁴⁰BUILDER, Oct., 1928, p. 299.

¹⁴¹Already quoted, BUILDER May, 1928, p. 132.

Class: Degree Sub-class: (a) Degree in English legal sense. (b) Ceremony-with-secrets.

In short, following the classic example of Humpty Dumpty in Through the Looking Glass, we will pay the word extra and make it mean what we like.

It is obvious, as we think, that the Royal Arch and the Installed (or Past) Master have every characteristic of a degree, there are in them secrets, communicated to duly qualified persons under a vow of secrecy, in a ritual that is also secret and which is accompanied by a legendary history. The special qualifications demanded are not, for the student's purpose, a relevant mark of distinction. Historically the R.A. and P.M. are intimately connected with the first three degrees of our system, and no attempt to investigate the origin of the last mentioned can be complete that entirely ignores the additional ceremonies-with- secrets that in England are denied the name of degrees, though acknowledged to be part of the "pure Ancient" system.

Bro. Tuckett has collected much evidence to substantiate in some sense the vague statements of older Masonic authors regarding the Jacobite influence in early Speculative Masonry. Interesting as this is, it is yet itself too speculative, in the ordinary, non-technical sense of the word, to be dealt with here; though if, as has been frequently suggested, the degree of Master Mason is a cryptic allegory of the history of the cause of the Stuarts and the hopes of their supporters, it could hardly be left out of account. Bro. Tuckett, however, sees the effects of this influence rather in the formation of those early "additional" grades that were termed "Scottish," or more properly Ecossois.

The Rev. H. G. Rosedale does ascribe the third degree to this cause, unfortunately without seriously attempting to support it with evidence. He says for example:

It is clear that the two first Degrees were in existence and fully recognized though possibly not in separate form before the year 1717. The full "Third" Degree did not appear as an accepted Rite till 1724, when, according to Bro. Yarker and others, the old Jacobite Lodges in London owing to the repeated failures of Jacobite plots were beginning to regain strength and when the newly-formed Hanoverian Grand Lodge had proved a success. [142]

Earlier in the same paper in which this occurs, Bro. Rosedale had argued that the division of opinion in the country at large during the religious and political struggles of the seventeenth century had been reflected in the Masonic Fraternity, even to the extent of producing groups or lodges on each side of the dispute. No reason is given for this but probability. To us it seems highly improbable. That Masons, as individuals, were divided is certain; that their political and religious differences were carried into the lodges to the extent of creating two opposed Masonries there is no evidence at all. We cannot forget that the lodge at Warrington initiated on the same occasion the royalist Ashmole and the parliamentarian, Col. Mainwaring, at the very time the Civil War was tearing the country in two. That groups of royalist Masons may have formed lodges and made Masons of other royalists is very possible, just as a group of good Presbyterian Masons at the siege of Newcastle initiated Robert Moray, but this is not at all the same thing that we understand Bro. Rosedale to assert. Still less can we accept his contention that the schism between the Moderns and the Ancients had their roots in these political and religious differences,

¹⁴²Trans. Man. Ass'n, 1919-1920, p. 21.

especially as no evidence is advanced in support of the hypothesis. In justice to Bro. Rosedale, however, it must be said that he touched on this matter only as preliminary to an examination of later ritual development (which of course is outside our present purpose altogether) and so did not really attempt to prove his statements.

Bro. Rosedale followed the late John Yarker in this idea of two opposed Masonries divided on politico-religious grounds, though he may of course have reached the conclusion quite independently. Bro. Yarker seemed to be willing to admit the antiquity of the essentials of our present system, but his theory is complicated by his acceptance of the modern Operative or Guild Masons. These claims are so far apart from the main lines of this investigation that we must ignore them here. [143]

A number of other brethren have addressed themselves to the problem of the origin of the sublime degree of Master Mason. Two of these essays call for brief mention. Bro. Moir Dow in discussing "The Basis of the Third Degree," appears to accept a system of two grades as inherited by the Grand Lodge of 1717 from the old lodges which composed it; but seems to suppose that this was a comparatively recent evolution from a Single initiation. At least he thinks it

... highly probable that by this simple mode Elias Ashmole was "made a Mason" in 1646 ... and he goes on to say that

There is evidence, however, that side by side with the one Degree mode, the reception ceremony comprised two steps or stages. We know definitely that a certain point the Entered Apprentice withdrew from the Lodge Room - when the initiate received further instruction. This early evidence (based on Scottish records), is of high importance as manifesting evolution in a ritualistic direction ... and it is therefore probable that by the close of the 17th century influenced by the increasing speculative element that the two-Degree system developed, became crystallized, and displaced in England generally the original sole Degree. [144]

The evidence, "based on Scottish records" must be, we presume (unfortunately no references are given) the "Haughfoot minute," interpreted in the light of the Chetwode Crawley MS. The hypothesis offered by Bro. Dow is a new combination of the elements. Contrary to the earlier investigators he seems to incline to the belief that the more complex two degree system arose in Scotland. We could wish that he had developed his arguments in favour of this view. We can only guess that it is based on the fact that the lodge at Haughfoot seems to offer the earliest existing record of two separate grades which comprised ceremonies with special secrets pertaining thereto. Not, we think, sufficient to produce conviction. And we might ask why a single initiation should have been divided or expanded in the 17th century, when Freemasonry was still mainly operative, if there were no earlier tradition of such division?

¹⁴³Bro. Yarker's views are set forth, not very coherently, in his work The Arcane Schools, in which a mass of interesting material has been collected. We must confess though that we do not think the author an entirely safe guide in its interpretation. For the claims of the modern operatives, see also Carr, The Ritual of the Operative Freemasons, and Merz, Guild Masonry in the Making. The articles in the BUILDER for 1926 may also be consulted.

¹⁴⁴Trans. Man. Ass'n, 1922-1925, p. 28.

Two years later Bro. G. W. Bullamore defended the "Antiquity of the Third Degree." In this paper he made some interesting suggestions. He supposes that the three classes mentioned in the Old Charge,

... the "Masons, fellows or freemasons" of the Apprentice Charge are the accepted Masons, Mark fellows and Master builders. These three classes would meet in separate lodges... There would be no regular advance from accepted Mason or layer to mark mason or hewer and then from hewer to master. The Master's Lodge could no doubt confer the secrets of all three degrees, and in this sense might be considered to work the three degrees, but the evidence of the Old Charges favours the view that the apprentice when he had finished his time either became a fellow or else a master on account of his exceptional abilities. [145]

Or we might add, because he had capital enough behind him, or was the son or relative of a master. Bro. Bullamore further said that our present ceremonies originated from these three types of lodges, and that there

... are facts which suggest that distinct types of Lodges have amalgamated to form our present ceremonies. The struggle between Ancients and Moderns was far too great to have been produced by a few minor alterations in the ritual. [146]

This last may be true, and we are inclined to think it is, but as Bro. Bullamore does not tell us what these facts are on which he bases this rather startling theory of the amalgamation of quite separate units we can hardly criticize it profitably. As for the third degree itself, which presumably was that of the "master builders" in his classification of ranks or kinds of operative Masons, he apparently would explain its genesis in the light of foundation sacrifices. Not at all an original idea, of course; and though he adduces many interesting facts, yet he does not develop the argument based on them very definitely, probably because of difficulties that will be apparent to all Freemasons. [147]

Gould's argument on this point depends on the lack of precision in ascribing any date to the supposed change, either by the Grand Lodge itself in 1809, when it spoke vaguely of 1736, or by Preston or Dermott. The unrecorded motion of 1730, earlier than the publication of Prichard's work, and so unaffected by it, seems to him the only possible place to be found for it in the record. From that it would follow, on his premises, that as the things transposed were still equally component parts of the original first grade, their order was a matter of no consequence. To that we would repeat that there may have been a traditional order within the old "Apprentice Part," and that changing this was one of the "measures adopted." If a recollection of this was handed down, and it is precisely the kind of thing that might be thus remembered, it would be more probable that both its date and the exact circumstances might be forgotten, while the main fact was remembered that there had been a transposition for the purpose of excluding unrecognized Masons or imposters. Our own opinion is that there was such an original, traditional sequence, and that it had been changed; and further that this "slogan" of the "Ancients," as it might be termed in present day parlance, merely represented the differences between them and the "Moderns"-which

¹⁴⁵A. Q. C., Vol. xxxviii, p. 68.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., p. 76.

¹⁴⁷Readers who desire to follow this up may be referred to Bro. J.S. M. Ward's recent work Who Was Hiram Abiff? There is much material of this kind in Frazer's Golden Bough and Tyler's Primitive Culture.

ere many and important- and which they supposed (not unnaturally) were all deliberated novations on the part of the latter. Though in all probability most of them were actually nerited from variations antedating 1717, many years perhaps, possibly centuries.	e ly

PART 11

ANOTHER scholar, Arthur Edward Waite, an authority in his own field, calls for brief mention, although he does not seem to have investigated our problem very deeply himself, but depends, it would seem, chiefly upon the conclusions reached by others. Indeed he tells us that he has no direct interest in archaeological matters. [148] His views are not easily summarized, because to fully understand them requires at least an acquaintance with his belief in a "secret tradition," and a "mystical quest," a subject that is on a different level altogether from that of the present discussion. He is willing to accept either one, or two grades, in the original operative system, and assumes that the present first degree is founded more or less upon the ancient ritual. [149] He notes that Speth held that the original two degrees embodied the essentials of our present system, but thinks that Gould modified this position considerably, as he says the latter held that

... the terms Fellow Craft and Master were interchangeable and had reference to one and the same thing, being a Second Degree, but he did not suggest that it contained the present elements of the Master Grade.

We would not like to contradict this, as we gather Bro. Waite has had better opportunities to learn what Gould's opinions really were than we have had, but, from the latter's published works, we have distinctly gathered the impression that in his opinion the original second grade did comprise the elements of our third. But perhaps this difference of opinion rests on differing idea of what the elements of the third degree really are.

Bro. Waite expresses himself as in a painful quandary. He has sought longingly to find some trace of the existence of the allegory and symbolism of the Master Builder earlier than the Grand Lodge era, but sorrowfully confesses he has not yet heard of any indication of this; although he insists, on the other hand, that it is incredible that any one of that particular period, and in London of all places, could have invented it. With this we heartily agree. It is, we believe, a psychological impossibility that it should have been invented in the 18th century. The period is either too early or too later. [150]

The Rev. F. de P. Castells has very recently published two books, the Origin of the Masonic Degrees and the Antiquity of the Holy Royal Arch. Like Bro. Waite his interest chiefly lies in the symbolical and mystical side of the subject, but unlike him he does not seem to retain so firm a grasp on fact. Bro. Waite frankly admits the lack of support given by existing evidence to the continuity of the "secret tradition," while Bro. Castells is inclined to bridge the gap by force of suppositions and straining of the evidence. As his books are easily obtainable there is no call here to set forth his views in any detail. He is familiar with most of the documents in the case, and quotes them freely. He holds the Royal Arch to be the original end of the Masonic system, and seems to believe in there having been two lines of descent, a purely Operative one, and a Speculative one concealed behind the former. Attractive as this hypothesis may be, we feel sure that the critically minded will prefer Bro. Waite's attitude of suspension of judgment, especially as there can

¹⁴⁸Waite, New Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, Preface, p. vi.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., vol. i, p. 280.

¹⁵⁰It is impossible to enlarge upon Bro. Waite's theories of the Master's grade, and we refer our readers to the work already mentioned, and to Emblematic Freemasonry, Chapter iii, and especially page 52.

be very few who know as much about occult and mystical schools as does the latter eminent scholar.

The Rev. Herbert Poole gave a paper before the Quatuor Coronati Lodge in 1924 on "Masonic Secrets and Ritual Before 1717." This exceedingly valuable essay however does not contain very much that is relevant to the question in hand. Bro. Poole classifies and discusses the evidence, and thence constructs a provisional sketch of the ritual forms that seem to be implied in the fragmentary descriptions and allusions that have come down to us. The only two passages referring to degrees are the following. The first is from the body of the paper:

All the sources imply (if they do not state it explicitly) that secrets were given after the oath of secrecy, and that this oath was administered at the commencement of the Masonic career of the candidate. Now since an apprentice was bound to his master for seven years, and forbidden under heavy penalties to seek work elsewhere, it would seem to be not only unnecessary, but perhaps even undesirable, for the apprentice to be able to prove himself a Mason to a stranger. Is it possible that the giving of the secrets to the apprentice indicates a "telescoping" of ceremonies for the benefit of the speculative? I doubt if full weight has been allowed to this possibility by past investigators of the problem of the number of degrees of ancient Masonry. [151]

The idea of a "continuing" ceremony is far from new as we have seen. Speth had spoken of the two degrees having "been practically welded into one" and the hypothesis had been accepted by other scholars. [152] The problem of the runaway apprentice is a real one, or at least it was. There would not have been pains and penalties so definitely provided had the phenomenon been unusual. But this is speaking of apprentices in general, in all trades. One can imagine that the temptation to run away was much greater in confined and sedentary employments. Further, in Scotland express provision is made in the Masonic code for the Apprentice to work "on his own" if his Master have no sufficient employment for him. [153] It is a point certainly requiring consideration however. There is evidence to indicate at least the possibility of such "welding" or "telescoping" of degrees, which would be a further stage of degeneration following upon a custom of "continuing" from one to the other on the same occasion.

The second passage referred to comes at the conclusion of the paper where Bro. Poole says:

Before closing, I must revert to the vexed question of "degrees." I have put this question on one side while dealing with my material; but it cannot be left there, though I do not propose to enter upon it now. I wish merely to throw out a suggestion, which I do not think has ever been emphasized, that in my opinion it is tied up with the question of "operative" and "speculative"; and that two "degrees," though not the same degrees, may have been worked by each- and that the operative "fellow" corresponded in some way with the speculative "master-mason", while possibly, as I have hinted earlier, the two operative degrees were communicated at once to the speculative. Along such lines, I believe, the solution to the question recast he searched for.

¹⁵¹A. Q. C., vol. xxxvii, p. 16. 152BUILDER, September, 1928, p. 270.

¹⁵³Lyon, History of the Lodge of Edinburgh, p. 16.

We hope that Bro; Poole will not forget his implied undertaking to develop this further, because, aside from the general value that his researches would have, we are not quite sure just what he has in mind in this distinction between operative and speculative systems. We judge that he may be referring to the present third degree, and if this guess is correct, then it would seem that he, like Bro. Ramsden Riley and others, holds, in common with the supporters of one degree, that the master's grade is an innovation in Masonry, even while admitting the existence of two grades in the original system.

We now come to the last scholar whose views call for mention, Bro. Lionel Vibert. He is indeed the only recent writer who has treated this subject systematically and at length, with the one exception of Bro. Castells. The character and aim of their respective investigations are, however, radically different. Bro. Vibert treats of the subject of "Ceremonies and Degrees" in a chapter of his well known and useful work, The Story of the Craft. He has since elaborated some phases of the problem in his Prestonian Lectures, the second of which was very recently submitted to the Quatuor Coronati Lodge in a somewhat amended form; the modifications being due to such criticisms and suggestions from other students as seemed to him to have merit. As this lecture was quite fully reviewed in THE BUILDER last year [154] it will be possible to treat it more briefly than its importance would otherwise demand.

In his earlier work^[155] Bro. Vibert accepts the conclusion reached by Murray Lyon, which has since been accepted almost as an article of faith by Masonic students generally, that:

The Scottish operatives in early days had but one ceremony and that was of the simplest natured

Bro. Vibert then goes on to say:

The English had a form of admission for the apprentice, and may, on continental analogies, have had some sort of feast at all events for the apprentice, out of his indentures, admitted to full membership of the Guild. But of ceremonial beyond an oath and prayers and the reading of the Charges there is no clear evidence. Neither in Scotland nor in England was the operative master distinguished from the Fellows by the possession of any further secrets, or by anything that we should call a degree.

He then intimates the probability of some legend being preserved in the Fraternity concerning Hiram the Builder. and states his acceptance of the view that

... at all events by 1723, in England there were two ceremonies recognized. One was the apprentices ceremony and the other the Master's Part.

And a little further on he refers to the Miracle Play hypothesis of the origin of the Third Degree, pointing out however, that no play extant has been found that could be taken as its source. [156]

¹⁵⁴BUILDER, February, 1928, p. 56.

¹⁵⁵Vibert, Story of the Craft, p. 75.

¹⁵⁶ The late Bro. Robert Race was the most prominent advocate of this theory, which he set forth in a most interesting and suggestive article. (See Trans. Manchester Ass'n, 1918-1919 vol. ix p. 9.) We may here remark that Bro. D. E. Williamson Associate Editor of THE BUILDER, has carefully read every Medieval play that has been published in English, French, German or Latin, and states positively that there is nothing to be found that by any Stretch of the imagination could be taken as a parallel to the legend in question.

Now there here appears a chasm that is unbridged. In the indefinite operative period there is only one ceremony; for the possible feast hardly seems to come under the head, that is, in the same sense. But some time before 1723 there were in London at least two ceremonies each conferring a certain status. Bro. Vibert has made no attempt to bridge this gap. He has only undertaken to propound a reason for the two having been converted into three.

In broad outline his hypothesis is that this evolution arose out of the problem created by the need for new lodges, due to the rapid growth of the Fraternity in London in and after the year 1720. He suggests that the establishment of permanent organized bodies (in distinction to the casual lodges of six or seven Masons "well met," which formed themselves by inherent right, and dissolved immediately) was, if not an innovation altogether, regarded as such by the brethren. And that it was as a measure of control over the situation that Payne compiled his Regulations. And further, that the clause in Regulation XIII, which has been so often referred to, was devised mainly for the purpose of keeping a cheek on those who were to be eligible to office in the new lodges. Bro. Vibert does not put it quite in this way, but it seems to be what is implied in what he says.

Now the Regulations also provided that the Master and Wardens of a lodge should be "among the Fellow Craft." As the old qualification of the Master's Part could only be given in the Grand Lodge it is suggested that a new degree of Fellow Craft was formed out of the original first grades like Eve out of Adam's rib, for the purpose of qualifying those-selected for office without going to the Grand Lodge. Stating it thus baldly does not do the theory justice, and as the lecture is easily accessible we must refer our readers to it. [157]

The great attraction of Bro. Vibert's theory is that for the first time a definite, tangible, motive is suggested which does seem to be adequate to the known effect; for Gould's theory of misunderstanding would be a cause rather than a motive. Precisely for this reason it needs the closest scrutiny, for it is a general failing to be blind to the difficulties raised by an explanation that appeals to us. The chief difficulty here is that of seeing why the direct way out of the dilemma was not taken. As was pointed out in the review above mentioned, and by several of those who took part in the discussion in Quatuor Coronati Lodge, the Grand Lodge was merely the particular lodges in general council, and it is not easy to see how it could persist, as a unit, in a course that was causing general dissatisfaction to its component parts. It does not appear to us that Bro. Vibert has altogether succeeded in meeting this difficulty.

The discussion that followed the lecture revealed as many different points of view as those who took part in it. To begin with, there seemed to be no definite agreement as to the connotation of the terms used; degree, master, fellow, apprentice, mason. And behind this, very different prepossessions in regard to what the essential elements of the various ritual forms might have been. As a result the impression is given that those taking part were, to some extent, at cross purposes. Bro. Covey-Crump doubted if "Fellow" and "Master" were identical terms. He seemed inclined to suspect that the masters, in the sense of employers, "bosses," had ceremonies or traditions of their own, while the non-operative honorary members became fellows immediately by the omission of the apprenticeship, but that,

¹⁵⁷Bro. Vibert's second Prestonian Lecture is included in the Transactions of the Merseyside Ass'n for Masonic Research 1926, p. 47, and those of the Somerset Masters' Lodge for 1926 p. 562. In its amended form it appears in A. Q. C., vol. xxxix, p. 208.

though fellows, they were not masters. In effect this seems to be bringing back the theory of an original three degrees ceremonies-with-secrets instead of two.

Bro. J. Heron Lepper also seemed to doubt the equivalence of Master and Fellow-Craft in Regulation XIII, basing his questioning on the fact that Pennell in his reprint (and revision) of the Constitutions quite unmistakably makes provision for three grades. But, as has been pointed out previously, Prichard exhibited three degrees two months later, while the Philo-Musicae et Architecturae Societas had apparently worked three in London four years earlier. [158]

Bro. Tuckett, assuming the existence of lodges and Masons throughout the country, asked why, or how, they came to adopt the inserted grade, which had no purpose or object outside the new organization? And he raised the further point, that qualification is not derived from a mere name, which was all the new degree amounted to. That is, the new-style fellow possessed no more than the old-style mason or apprentice; and he reverts to his own hypothesis that the two grades of the old system were equivalent to our first and second degrees, containing the same esoteric essentials; and that there was the additional ceremony-with-secrets (which was not a degree) containing the Hiramic legend, and commonly known as the Master's Part.

Bro. W. J. Williams also doubted the equivalence of master and fellow, and thought the use of the word "degree" in the discussion led to confusion of thought; as in our sense degrees did not then really exist. He argues, and quotes Gould in support, that master meant only master of the lodge.

Bro. Poole thus summarized his understanding of Bro. Vibert's position. Owing to the nonoperative or speculative members being made members of the Fraternity the two steps as taken by them were

- 1. Apprentice and Fellow
- 2. What we now call Master

but that in 1723, though still containing the same elements in the same order, these became

- 1. Apprentice
- 2. Fellow Craft and Master

and gives it as his solution of the puzzle that the change was not an innovation but a restoration of the older (operative?) practice. That is, if we understand him, that the two ceremonies, which had been made one for the speculative because he did not serve an apprenticeship, now became two again. But this seems also to imply the original existence, in some form, of three steps, grades or ceremonies-with-secrets.

Bro. J. Walter Hobbs, however, seemed to stand by the dual system, and affirmed the two grades to have been apprentice and master, with fellow as an alternate term for the latter, signifying full membership presumably, and he pertinently points out what "a whirl of varied titles" are used in our available documentary sources. Still he is inclined to adopt Bro. Poole's suggestion as affording a possible avenue of escape from the confusion, that

¹⁵⁸BUILDER, January, p. 29, and December, 1928, p. 357.

the Operatives and Speculatives each worked two degrees but not the same degrees. To us this would seem to promise to make the confusion worse confounded.

Bro. Bullamore rejected the conclusion that there were only two degrees in 1723, accepting the vague hint in the letter signed Verus Commodus in 1725 [159], that there were "five orders" in the Masonic system, which "orders" he seems to accept as equivalent to degrees. The hostile skit he here referred to is hardly sufficient authority by itself, and the phrase "the fifth order" obviously refers, from the context, to the five orders of architecture.

Bro. Thos. M. Carter, while seeing a difficulty in the brief space of time in which the supposed method for evading the force of Regulation XIII came to be "practically universally adopted," sees also a moral difficulty in such a systematic evasion. This objection does seem to have weight, and we are inclined to hold that this facet of the complex dilemma is best resolved by assuming that the Regulation was merely a restatement of the old rule that apprentices were only to be passed in the general assembly, to which everybody was agreed in theory, while force of habit and mere convenience tended to make the attempted revival of the old law a dead letter from the start. There is nothing strange or unusual in that. All organizations are subject to the same experience, not only in their beginnings but even when well established, of making rules that prove quite unworkable in practice.

Bro. Daynes, referring to the statement made by Bro. Vibert, that while authority could be, and was, delegated to constitute new lodges, there was "no delegation of the power to confer the Master's Part," pointed out that it was not conclusive because the Regulation expressly adds, after the general prohibition of making Masters and Fellow-Crafts in the private lodges, the saving clause, "unless by dispensation." Bro. Vibert said that there being no record of Grand Lodge passing Masters and Fellows proves nothing, which is true; but neither does the absence of any record of the granting of dispensations prove they were not given. It may be that they were, and that the repeal of the clause was due to the absurdity of a practical annulment by dispensation. He also pointed out, what the other brethren seem to have somewhat lost sight of, that the Haughfoot records are definitely witness to a dual system in 1702, [160] and he might have added Dunblane, a little lateral. [161]

In reply Bro. Vibert acknowledged the difficulties raised and sought to meet them. Admitting the confused terminology in the sources, he yet thinks they point to the sequence, Apprentice, Fellow and Master; changing that of Gould and Speth who interpreted the documents as witnessing to the arrangement Apprentice, Master, Fellow. He repeats that these ranks were given in two steps, and to non-operatives, in the grouping A. & F., and then M. And he insists that the character of the two steps was quite different, the first being "purely symbolic and based on Two Pillars," while the other "was associated with a Hiramic Legend." But this of course is precisely one of the points at issue; was there at that time a step or ceremony based on a Hiramic Legend? It is quite possible to deny that

¹⁵⁹Gould, History, vol. iv, p. 286.

¹⁶⁰In 1707 the lodge resolved, "except on special considerations" not to "admit to the Society both of apprentice and fellowcraft, at the same time, but that one year at least should intervene ..." A. Q. C., vol. xvi p. 178.

¹⁶¹In 1716 it was enacted "that in tyme coming there he no measons or vthers entered and passed ... at one and the same time." Lyon, op. cit., p. 416.

there was and yet hold that there were two degrees, or ritual steps; and as we have seen, this explanation has been advanced by more than one authority. It is thus only in obedience to a natural progress in the investigation that in recent years attention has been specially turned to the problem of the origin of our third degree.

Bro. Vibert then goes on to offer a modified version of his theory in view of the suggestions and criticisms that had been offered to it in its original form. It is in bare outline as follows:

The "trade system" had a symbolic step connected with Pillars. The apprentice was merely sworn (just as in other crafts we judge) but when out of his time, became a Fellow and full member of the fraternity by the symbolic steps of the Pillars.

The non-operative honorary or speculative member "must needs go through the form of being admitted an apprentice," yet nevertheless proceeded

... then and there to full membership. The speculative, therefore, as an apprentice, learnt about the Pillars, both of them. Nevertheless the step was really a double one - it conferred in one day the rank of full membership that in the trade was only to be achieved after years of work and sometimes not then.

We do not know on what grounds the suggestion was made, that full membership was not always attained, or how much it implies, but that is aside from the point. The italics in the above passage are Bro. Vibert's. It seems to us that the hypothesis is not the obvious or simplest way of relating the facts. While the Regulations do expressly give "even the youngest Apprentice" a voice and a vote in the annual Assembly of the Grand Lodge, or rather, concurrent with it, it does not seem that this is to be taken as indicating that the majority of Masons present ranked only as Apprentices, even in the light of the note in the Mystery of Freemasons that;

There is not one Mason in a Hundred that be at the Expense to pass the Master's Part, except it be for Interest.

Even granting that the only ceremonial in the operative period that was worthy of the name of an initiation was that at the end of the apprenticeship, it does not seem necessary to suppose, or even natural, that the non-operative who, after being sworn in as an Apprentice in ordinary form, and then straightaway given his freedom, by being passed through the initiation that normally followed years later, should be denied the rank of a fellow, and held to be only an apprentice. Or to put it another way; though for the honorary or speculative candidate, apprentice oath and fellowship ritual were combined in a continuing, or even "telescoped," ceremony, yet his status would be that of the higher, not the lower rank, and he would be called fellow equally with those who had served their full time.

Bro. Vibert then says:

While we cannot say categorically what esoteric knowledge is in every ease implied in the use of the term Fellow Oraft, it does appear as though, in the operative system, it cannot have involved a knowledge of anything beyond the Pillars. Nowhere in the Constitutions is it suggested or even hinted that the Master of the Lodge must have prior knowledge of the narrative ceremony or its accessories.

By "narrative-ceremony" is meant that embodying the Hiramic legend. Bro. Vibert further asserts that, technically, by the letter of the (English) law, a Fellow-Craft is still qualified to serve as Warden and Master of a lodge. But while this may have real foundation in fact, it seems here to be loud the issue. The question in point is not whether at a later time the letter of the law qualified for office those with the title, Fellow Craft, but, what did that title imply in 1723? And further, while it may be true that there is no hint that the brother elected to office as Master had to have the status of Master Mason (and this might be questioned) [162] it does not follow, necessarily, that "knowledge of the narrative" was not required, if it be supposed to have been, at that time, included in the grade of Fellow. Bro. Vibert of course does not suppose this. His scheme seems to be:

- 1. Status of Apprentice, acquired by the formality of registration, and an oath to obey his master and the rules of the trade, just as in other occupations.
- 2. Fellow, attained normally at end of apprenticeship, with an initiation concerning the Pillars
- 3. Master, a ceremony-with-secrets, originally restricted to employers, and dealing with the Hiramic narrative.

This scheme being granted his hypothesis does seem logical. That is if we grant his further contention that the office of Master of the lodge was a new thing. And this does find support in the Old Charges, and from other sources, too, in that it seems to be implied that the individual who presided in a lodge was the senior fellow. In workshops, the master was of course the man who "hired and fired", and paid wages. Under the new regime of speculative Masonry the new lodges elected their presidents, and called them Masters. The old qualification for an employer (i.e. the "narrative ceremony") might be insisted on by analogy and we remember that Anderson takes pains to describe the speculative lodge, figuratively, in terms of the workshop; the presiding officer being the employer, in a speculative sense. But on the other hand, the new elective officer might be regarded as taking the place of the "senior fellow", who traditionally presided in such groups; in which case no further qualification was needed. The Grand Lodge, having assumed control of the "narrative ceremony," the lodges adopted the latter alternative; and then, to make more of their ritual, enlarged the Apprentice part, by adding to its bare formalities part of the symbolic content of the Fellow. The difficulty here is that Regulation XIII speaks of Fellow Craft as well as Master. That would seem to leave the lodges only the bare formality of an oath. Bro. Vibert of course assumes that the Fellow's part (concerning the Pillars) had been attached to that of the Apprentice, but if so why did the Regulation include the Fellow Craft? Was it merely pure confusion, or divergence of opinion, or what?

¹⁶²It could be argued, and it is the position that we are inclined to accept, that the term "master" in the Constitutions is used in two, or rather three, distinct senses: (a) Master of the Craft of the trade and its technical processes; (b) master in the sense of an employer of other masons; and (c) master, or presiding officer of a lodge. Indefinite as such usage may sound we submit that there are very few places in the Constitutions where the particular meaning is not fairly clear from the context, though there may be places where two of the three meanings are combined. As in the much discussed clause of Regulation xiii, "Master" may mean both masters as competent workmen and masters as employers. There is no contradiction or difficulty raised in such an interpretation, for the master as employer is assumed to be master of his trade. We think, however, that in this place (and in others also) the latter meaning is to be taken as the dominant one.

We are not absolutely sure that Bro. Vibert would accept this version of his theory. [163] we have tried to distinguish his postulates from his argument, and to present the latter apart from discussion of the validity of his conception of the situation. And in our opinion, that being granted, his theory seems to fit the case very well.

Bro. Vibert concludes by saying that the last word has not been said; and this undoubted fact has its compensations, for were the question finally settled there would be a distinct loss of interest in research, for it is without doubt one of the most exciting problems connected with the history of the Fraternity. Perhaps, though, the interest is after all only a derived one. We have remarked above that discussion in recent years had turned from this particular problem to that of the origin of the Master's grade. Really the question of the number of the original degrees is a flank attack upon this more significant problem, and agreement on this would doubtless greatly increase the chances of agreement on the subsidiary investigation, the progress of which we have been surveying.

¹⁶³Since this was written this resume was submitted to Bro. Vibert, and he writes us that he considers it "perfectly fair" and remarks on the confusion the matter is in due to the looseness of the terminology.

PART 12

HAVING freely criticized the work of others it is now our turn to present our own conclusions, to be the prey and sport of others. Doubtless our readers have gathered much of our views on the negative side, and perhaps something on the positive side also. But it may be well to briefly recapitulate the different types of theory that have emerged. The naive theory that three degrees, essentially as they exist today, were part of the original system is certainly untenable, and we doubt if anyone in the least familiar with the evidence would support it. But in a modified form it still seems to persist. Bro. Tuckett's two degrees and a ceremony-with-secrets is a triple arrangement, and so in truth is Bro. Vibert's theory of two grades preceded by the formalities of swearing in the Apprentice, for the latter seems to be not much more empty of content, considered as a "degree," than the single ceremony, "crude" and "simple," of Hughan, Lyon and others.

The single initiation theory has taken different forms; all the way from the bare "entry," and the communication of a password, asserted by Gould, up to the inclusion in it of all the essentials of the present first and second degrees, and even to embodying those of the third degree as well.

The two degree theory has still more variants. It can be taken as comprising the elements of our first and third, of our first and second, and also of a bare entry as a first step, with the combined elements of our two first degrees for the second one. And still other combinations are possible. How is anything like order to be evolved out of such chaos?

It does seem to emerge, however, that many of these conclusions have been reached, not on the implications of the evidence as it stands, but on the latter as viewed in the light of various prepossessions, themselves based on quite other considerations which do not appear in the argument, or at least not explicitly; in many cases, indeed, without any clear realization on the part of the individual that they are there, and perhaps sometimes wholly unconscious. For example, it certainly seems as if the well known American students, Mackey and Pike, eagerly accepted the single initiation theory when it was first propounded by Findel, because of their interest in the Scottish Rite. As scholars they were obliged to admit the eighteenth century origin of the "high" grades out of which that Rite was formed, and this put it into an inferior position in regard to the venerability that is conferred by antiquity. But if the significant and fundamental part of "Craft" Masonry, the Third Degree, were also an eighteenth century invention, then it would, at best, have but a few years seniority over the "Scottish" grades. This is merely one case, for such prepossessions may be observed or suspected in perhaps most of the brethren who have sought to explain the confusing records, as indeed is in the nature of things practically inevitable. We are, therefore, going to begin by as full confession as we can make of our own prepossessions, and thus have all the cards on the table. These may be taken as postulates for the ensuing argument. Their truth is a separate question, to be argued separately. But we shall put our case thus: if they are true, then the acknowledged facts can be explained thus and thus. The conclusions reached can then be criticized in two ways; directly, on the ground whether they do or do not follow from the evidence in the light of the postulates: or else indirectly, by attacking the postulates. But the defense of the latter is outside our present limits. We can only state them here, not explain or substantiate them.

So much turns upon the question of ritual that it is necessary to make some general observations upon the subject, for strange as it may seem, there appears to be no little uncertainty in its meaning as used by Masonic writers. A great deal has been learned since our earlier scholars did their work, and there is now little excuse for haziness or confusion. Yet, even now, it seems as if most of those who touch upon the subject do implicitly regard the Masonic ritual as something that was at some time, by some one, deliberately and consciously devised, invented and propagated. That whether it is supposed that it was Desaguliers, Anderson or Payne, or whether it was some unknown personage of the Stuart or the Reformation period or in the Middle Ages, it is unconsciously assumed that the motives and objects were of a practical, didactic or ethical character, and would appeal as such to our civilized mentality. But the great mass of material now available, collected by anthropologists and students of folklore and similar subjects, presents too many parallels to Masonic ritual for such an uncritical assumption to be longer tenable. We know now how extremely tenacious folk or group memory is. How resistant it is to innovation, even though subject often enough to decay and atrophy; sometimes followed by revival. It is not an isolated phenomenon that we are investigating, as to earlier scholars it inevitably appeared to be.

An Analysis Of Ritual

Following the general results of the anthropological sciences ritual generally may be thus analyzed. There are two obvious elements the things said and the things done. Each of these is again naturally divisible into what is essential to the purpose of the rite, and what is merely supplemental. The supplementary may be also subdivided, but it is not necessary to do so here.

The two essential elements in any rite are always closely and vitally related, the thing said is the verbal counterpart of the thing done; in the supplementals, spoken and performed, this is not necessarily so, things may be done that have no spoken formula as counterpart, things may be said, exhortations and explanations for example, unaccompanied by any action. For illustration let us take the Christian rite of Baptism. It is of the simplest possible character, there is one thing done, aspersion with, or dipping into water, with its necessary accompanying verbal formula. All beyond this in Church services is supplementary. The proof is that it can in emergency be omitted. The Eucharist is slightly more complex; it contains several essential actions, manipulation of the elements, and administration, each with its accompanying spoken counterpart. When we come to a rite like Coronation we come to something that is really complex, and primitive too, there is much more to it than merely putting on a crown. But it would take us too far afield to go into that now [164]. But when we analyze the Masonic ritual from this point of view we find that it is essentially complex. There are a number of things that are absolutely necessary to be done, each with a corresponding verbal formula that is entirely apart from any explanation or exhortation, and which is quite separable from the ceremonial that inevitably grows up about the essentials of a rite when it is performed at regular intervals in a place especially set aside for the purpose. But the essentials remain, complex as they may be, entirely between the neophyte and the officiant. The latter may of course depute others to do certain things, but however customary such deputation may become the fact remains that, setting aside all questions of validity and regularity, it is still possible for one individual to do everything that is really necessary and essential in initiation. This probably will sound very startling, but we believe that upon reflection upon the things that are essential the truth of the statement will become obvious. The importance of this will appear later. It nullifies any argument from the casual methods that seem to have been by no means rare in Scotland; that the initiation of a candidate was sometimes performed by two or three Masons, or even apparently by one alone in some instances, proves nothing in regard to the character of the forms that were used.

Much of the complexity of the ritual is quite obscured in modern recensions, in which the hortatory and didactic is so preponderant in mass. Yet all this, genetically considered, consists of accretions about the primitive essentials. Viewed as consciously devised for didactic, ethical or mystical objects, the earliest ritual forms do naturally seem "simple" or "crude," but that this was their origin and first purpose it is difficult, in the light of present knowledge, to believe. In our opinion, "archaic" and "primitive" are far more accurate adjectives than "simple" or "crude," though crude they are in one sense, and from the

¹⁶⁴Those who wish to follow this further may be referred to A.M. Hocart's work Kingship, in which Coronation, Installation and Consecration are shown to be closely related. and also that marriage ceremonials are largely adaptations of those of coronation.

civilized standpoint. But the earliest vestiges of Masonic ritual remaining to us could no more have been invented de novo by medieval Operatives than they could have been by eighteenth century Speculative Masons. Their object, to our mental outlook, had originally nothing practical in them at all, they were purely magical. We do not mean that there was nothing more in the system of the medieval Masons, or more probably, of the builders' crafts; undoubtedly the old usages were adapted to the practical needs of the period, just as they have been continuously subject to adaptation ever since; and even at the beginning of the Grand Lodge era, the primitive elements had become very much what the coccyx and the vermiform appendix are in the human anatomy, i.e., residual vestiges of organs atrophied by disuse. They may (or may not) be of little importance in their later stages, but they cannot be ignored in an investigation into the history of the organism or organization.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PRIMITIVE MASONRY

The original "ceremony-with-secrets" or "narrative ceremony," that was in some way connected with the mastership, appears in its earliest known form as complex and primitive. We must insist on the complexity. It is plainly closely connected in origin (in a remote and indefinite past) with the many religio-magical folk customs that still survive in various places. The ritual dance of the Mummers or Guisers is an excellent parallel. We know, from recent collections of variations of this dance [165] that the vague plot of the drama enacted remains the same, with a significant persistence of what at first glance seem most trivial details; while the characters, on the other hand, change their names like patterns in a kaleidoscope. The earliest form of the Mason's drama, or play, or dance, has only two named characters, and the selection of these names seems quite secondary and non-essential. But we have in it a curious insistence on the numbers three and fifteen and on the points of the compass. There is a ritual death, a green bush or tree growing out of a grave, which in primitive ideas is, not a resurrection exactly, but a continuance of life; and then a real resurrection through a word of power, or evocation by a mystery name. [166]

There are, also, equally magical elements in the preliminary initiation or "making"; and it would be possible to reconstruct hypothetically a primitive original ceremony on those lines alone, without any trace of symbolic or moral teaching. There is the tabs on metals, the deisul, or sunwise circumambulation, the sacred enclosure, the contact with fetich objects, merely to mention some of the more obvious of these survivals. How these things got into the Masonic system, and what their line of transmission, is yet another question. All that is necessary to say here is, that in our opinion, they are discoverable, and that, too, not as incidental borrowings or conveyances, but as part of the very warp of the relics of operative ritual still extant.

Irrelevant as this may perhaps seem, we do think that it will help to clarify the situation. The evidence with which we are dealing is not sufficient in itself to lead to any determinate conclusion, it must be interpreted on the basis of some hypothesis. Instead of leaving others to guess at our conceptions, and preconceptions, in respect to the question, we are making them explicit. And we trust that if we draw conclusions differing from those reached by others from the same evidence, we will not be regarded as illogical or perverse, but that it will be recognized that we are looking at the facts in a different light and from another point of view.

¹⁶⁵Tiddy, The Mummers Play; Chambers, The Medieval Stage.

¹⁶⁶We may refer for a more detailed, though only preliminary expression of this view to the articles in THE BUILDER, Vol. ix, page 177, "The Origin of the Legend of the Third Degree," and Vol. x, page 67, "Mythology and Masonry."

THE DEFINITION OF TERMS

There is another source of misunderstanding, and that is the undefined and fluid terms that occur in the discussion. The meaning or meanings of the distinctive names Master, Fellow, Mason, and their variants and combinations, are really part of the problem to be solved. The term degree, also, has varying meanings; and we may here add to what has already been said about it by giving a definition of our own. It would be preferable to use some other word if there were one available, but there does not seem to be. What we desire to express by it is the concept of a ceremony in and through which certain secrets are communicated to an individual, by others who have already received them in the same way. Or it might be better to put it even more generally; a secret ceremony by which an individual enters into a special relationship to a group of others who have already passed through it.

This is a good deal more comprehensive than the ordinary Masonic sense of the word as it is now used. It is also more indefinite. This should be borne in mind in order to obviate any risk of transferring characteristics common to present day degrees to the ritual forms of the past.

THE CRITICISM OF EVIDENCE

The next thing that needs preliminary discussion is the general question of evidence. By what canons is it to be criticized, accepted or rejected, and what rules are to be observed in its use?

It may perhaps appear that this is a rather unnecessary digression, seeing that the canons of historical criticism are well established, and very generally known. While this is perfectly true, yet there are certain features in our present problem which seem to call for some reference to first principles. As we have seen in tracing the discussion of the origin of degrees from its beginning, there has not been entire agreement as to what evidence should be received and what rejected; or how to interpret what was received and how its weight was to be estimated. Hughan, for example, practically rejected the ritual documents. These do present a difficult question, and there might be a plausible case made out for their rejection as evidence. But further than this, Hughan, and Gould also, were inclined to minimize or ignore certain other documents, such as the Haughfoot and Dunblane minutes, which are undoubtedly authentic in that they are what they profess to be, records of Masonic lodges. We are, therefore, obliged to ask if evidence may be rejected because it will not fit into a certain scheme or theory? Doubtless, put generally, every one would say no. But this is not final. Suppose that we have pieced together a perfectly logical and selfconsistent pattern out of many scattered fragments, and there are one or two left over that will not fit in, we are almost obliged to give some added weight to the pieces that fit and deduct some from those that will not.

Gould touched upon this subject in his commentary on the Regius MS. where he says, referring specially to the old Charges [167];

The value of the evidence ... depends upon the channels through which it has descended... Therefore leaving undecided all minor questions relating to [the particular documents under consideration] I think their inclusion among the "records of the Craft" is of itself sufficient to demonstrate the necessity of a legal system of classification being used concurrently with the philological and other methods that may be called into requisition.

We have italicised the word legal, as it is significant of the general trend of his position. He continues:

When in a court of law, ancient documents are tendered in support of ancient possession, care is especially taken to ascertain the genuineness of the documents produced and this may in general be shown, prima facie, by proof that they come from the proper custody It is not however necessary that they should be found in the best and most proper place of deposit, but it must appear that the instrument comes from such custody, as though not strictly proper in point of law, is sufficient to afford a reasonable presumption in favour of its genuineness; and that it is otherwise free from just grounds of suspicion. Where old deeds have been produced as evidences in eases of title, from collections of manuscripts made for antiquarian purposes, they have been rejected. They must be produced from the custody of persons interested in the estate.

167Q.C.A. Vol. i, page 11; Reprinted in the Essays, p. 11.

The italics in the last passage are Gould's own. We see here quite plainly the position he was inclined to take. "Proper custody" in the case of Masonic documents would imply that a document was found in the possession of a Masonic Lodge, and also that it had always been in its archives, and further that the lodge was older than the document. A strict application of this rule would bar out all but some half dozen or so of the copies of the Old Charges. Gould was even inclined to insist, at least in 1884, that the Antiquity Roll No. 2, which had been in the possession from time immemorial of the oldest lodge in England, could not be accepted unreservedly. His reason being that it was dated 1686, while the engraved list of 1729, "the only official publication in which the dates of origin" are given of the oldest lodges, gives the Lodge of Antiquity as founded in 1691. Therefore, he argued, the MS. was older than the lodge, and we do not know how it came into its possession. [168]

In the later pronouncement he did make the following admission:

It is true, no doubt, that the historian has no rules as to exclusion of evidence or incompetency of witnesses. In his court every document may be read, every statement may be heard. But in proportion as he admits all evidence indiscriminately, he must exercise discrimination in judging of its effect..

With which caution every critically minded student must wholeheartedly agree. But we do not think so much weight can be given to his earlier purely legalistic contention, and it is necessary to explain why.

There is a constant tendency to take laws and legal rules as things or rather objects in themselves, and to neglect the reason for their existence or for the particular form in which they are cast. We cannot blame lawyers for this attitude of mind, for it is forced upon them by their profession, they have to interpret and apply the law as it actually is. For others, philosophers or historians let us say, and pre-eminently legislators of course (who ideally should be both) the purpose of law should be paramount, and that it is a means to an end, and not an end in itself, should never be forgotten. Consider then the circumstances of a court of law. The questions that come before it affect the property, the rights and liberties, and even the lives of individuals. We must remember also that normally, behind every suit or trial, there exists a state of hostility, strife, anger or resentment between individuals. Every condition is present to induce concealment or misrepresentation of facts by the parties concerned. The legal rules of evidence, as they have been evolved under the influence of English Common Law, are eminently sound, practical and just for the special purposes in view. But when the purposes or circumstances are changed they may no longer apply. They may become absurdly restrictive, and hamper instead of aiding the search for truth.

THE VALIDITY OF THE DOCUMENTS

Let us return to Gould's illustration. We can see why it should be required that documents upon which the ownership of property depends must be in the custody of those who are interested, in the eyes of the law; or else that it can be shown how they were removed from the proper custody, as for example, by theft. A deed is a unique document, it represents the property, there cannot be more than one. There may be copies, but each legally authenticated copy is also unique in a secondary sense. To be of any weight legally, a copy like the original must also have been made by the proper persons, attested in the proper manner, and in the custody of parties interested in the eyes of the law. Copies made for curiosity or as an exercise in writing would be of no effect no matter how accurate or exact. To take a very obvious and common example; a check has a certain value under the proper conditions; that is when it is drawn by one with sufficient funds to his credit, and that it is presented by the person named therein. A duplicate is valueless except under specific conditions, in which it replaces the original, and the latter (if in existence) becomes valueless in consequence. Photographs, drawings or other facsimiles or copies are useless for the proper purpose of checks.

The principle that seems to underlie the uniqueness of such documents is that they represent property, and for that reason cannot be multiplied; secondly, being unique they pertain to certain specified individuals who alone have interest in them, or right to them, in the legal sense. But historical documents are not unique in this way at all, while the interest is not restricted but general. Copies are as good as the originals, if exact and complete, and anyone has a right to intervene.

Gould by implication equated the Old Charges with deeds and similar legal instruments. The analogy is a misleading one. They should be likened rather to statute books and legal digests. A lawyer may cite Blackstone in an argument (we believe even yet this might be done) but the court will not ask him from what custody he produced his copy of this author. Of course this parallel is merely approximate, as Blackstone, who was the last of a series of exponents of English Law which began with Glanville in the 12th century, built upon court records which, if not often consulted, were in existence and could be adduced in evidence.

We may however examine more closely the specific case mentioned above. In the first place Gould seemed to think that the discrepancies and contradictions between certain copies or families of the Old Charges carried the implication that some of them were faulty, inaccurate and untrustworthy. But this depends on the purpose of our search. If we are seeking the original form, then we will naturally prefer the older documents, and have a prejudice in favour of any particular item found in them. If however we are tracing the evolution of Masonic law, then the later MSS. are as important as the earlier; nor can we summarily reject one of two of the same age because they are inconsistent. Only on the supposition that there was one, central, supreme, legislative organ in the Craft could we do this. And there is not the least indication that any such a thing existed in the past any more than in the historic period, with the exception of the superficial, if natural, presumption based on the references in the different versions of the Old Charges, that the Assembly spoken of in them was an Assembly for the whole kingdom. An assumption inherently improbable, not to say impossible. Different rules could well exist contemporaneously in a

number of centers, each independent, and capable of modifying old laws to fit changed circumstances.

Whether Robert Padgett copied the Antiquity Roll No. 2 in 1686, or whether there ever was such a person, is really irrelevant. Nor is it of consequence if the lodge is junior to the manuscript as Gould seemed to think, any more than it is through what channel such lodge became possessed of it whether by inheritance, in this case, of the records and archives of the Acception of the Mason's Company, or whether through some individual. Because, not only were lodges properly "interested" parties, but individual Masons were equally so. The real question is really whether or not the lodge received this particular document as an archeological curiosity, or as a valid copy of the traditional law as it then stood. The former alternative is highly improbable.

Now in the investigation that we have in hand this particular question discussed by Gould is of no consequence. So far as the evidence of the Old Charges bears upon our problem they are practically in accord. The important point is the principle involved. If we are to reject evidence on such narrow and legalistic grounds we will deny ourselves the right to consider the highly important ritual documents, which are known as the Old Catechisms, which all, with one exception, come to us from unknown, and in most cases highly suspicious sources. We, therefore, insist that the criticism of the evidence is not to be exclusively based on the ascertained history of the documents themselves, but on their contents. Naturally, we may gladly receive any confirmation that can be drawn from the legal rules of evidence, but these are not our only means of investigation nor even the most important.

Thus, just as anybody might be interested in a sonnet of Petrarch, or a folk legend, and write it down, just as any early Christian might have been interested in a letter from the Apostle Paul, just so any Mason would be interested in a copy of the Charges or notes of a (Catechism, and this interest is strictly analogous in its own field to the legal interest the inheritor of a piece of land has in the deed transferring it to his father or grandfather; though of course with much greater generality, and indefiniteness, as it would make no difference by whom, when, where or how the copies were made or acquired; neglecting here of course questions of accuracy.

There is a class of Masonic documents to which legal rules should be strictly applied, and those are Charters and Warrants, precisely because they are legal instruments. The discovery of an ancient charter of transmission or one empowering some person to propagate a rite or degree, in a museum or second-hand book shop gives no right to the discoverer or purchaser to transmit or propagate anything; and so of such documents we may demand that they be found in proper custody, or that it be shown, without any breaks in the chain of evidence, how they came to be elsewhere. But with these we have nothing to do fortunately.

PART 13

THE evidence that we have to work with in this investigation falls naturally under four heads.

These are here put in the order of their age, or more exactly, of the age of the oldest examples of each. They are:

The Old Charges or Constitutions.

Minutes and other lodge records.

Allusions and references.

The Ritual documents.

Of these, the second only, in our opinion, can properly be subjected to Gould's legalistic criterion. Lodge records should be found in lodge custody, or definitely traceable to such custody. In other words their history should be known and authenticated. As a matter of fact, though a number of the most important of these records belonged to lodges now extinct, namely, Atchison-Haven, Haughfoot, Alnwick and York, yet no doubt has arisen as to their authenticity. Their history after the decease of the respective lodges has been sufficiently determined, and there is nothing about them or their contents to have given any rise to any suspicion in the minds of the competent and critical scholars who have examined and discussed them.

The documents in the first class, the Old Charges, we must insist again, do not come under Gould's rule. For individual Masons were interested (in the strict legal sense) equally with organized groups. Indeed, as it appears that much of the activity of the Fraternity was carried on in ephemeral lodges of "brethren and fellows well met," the copies of the "Constitutions" used in them must very frequently have been in private custody, even though perhaps they may not always have been regarded as private property. Of the third class, most if not all of the various references in books have obviously no weight at all in the legal sense for, according to the accepted rules, they are no more than hearsay evidence. The diaries of Ashmole and Stukeley might be admissable, perhaps, in a court of law, we do not presume to say. But the idea of using legal rules in this case is obviously ridiculous. Gould himself admitted these allusions without any obvious qualms. From which it might appear that, lawyer-like, he only objected to evidence when it told against the case he was seeking to prove, though such a conclusion would not be just.

The fourth and last group of documents is in a different category altogether. Except in one instance, nothing whatever is known of their antecedents. In every case, with the one exception, we might easily and properly reject the witness, taken alone, as without any mark of authenticity to inspire credence. But these documents do not stand alone, they form a group with well marked characteristics. They have therefore to be examined carefully according to the canons of literary criticism, in the same way, for example, that the versions and recensions of the Graal Legend, and other legendary cycles, have been treated. Admittedly the results of such criticism are inferential, and often only hypothetical, but it would be foolish to refuse to use them on this account. Probabilities added to

probabilities cumulatively support each other, and may eventually reach a point only just short of practical certainty.

We have, therefore, to conclude that on the whole the legalistic method is entirely out of place in such investigations as this. Some may desire to abide by it; that is their privilege. But if the rule is adopted in one case, we may insist that it be consistently applied, and only the small handful of documents that will pass under it accepted. To pick and choose, to reject this document on legal grounds, while admitting others no better qualified, cannot be logically permitted. We prefer, as in practice most scholars have done, to admit every scrap of evidence and assign to it the weight it should carry in the light of such indications as are available. But the legal rule may be used as an extra support where it applies; and the documents that pass this test will in turn support others that cannot do so, but which agree with them in content. The evidence must be taken as a whole, and each part viewed in the light of the remainder.

THE VALUE OF NEGATIVE EVIDENCE

One more point must be touched upon before we leave these preliminaries. It arose incidentally in discussing Hughan's argument, [169] but it is so important that it is advisable to bring it up again. This is the question of the weight that should properly be given to negative evidence, or the argument from silence. It is very natural to suppose that a thing not spoken of, that we have never seen mentioned, does not exist. As natural as the contrary tendency to believe anything we are told where no reason appears to doubt it. Being natural tendencies of the mind, and being very frequently justified in experience, gives all the more reason to examine them critically. When we do so, we see that an unsupported statement, or conversely silence, about any given thing, merely raises a presumption that such thing does or does not exist. For example, we do not expect to find, and do not look for, gold or oil or buried treasure in any locality, until someone has found some by chance, or else that indications appear that experience has shown may betoken the existence of such things. No matter how complete and absolute the silence may have been, one single positive instance overturns any argument built upon it. A negative argument based on silence can only give a presumption that a thing does not exist. That presumption may be so great as to approach practical certainty, or it may be so small as to be almost without weight. Thus every negative argument must be judged on its own merits. The kind of circumstances to be taken into consideration are fairly obvious. To take an example, suppose a hundred men have prospected in the bed of a certain stream for placer gold without finding any trace of it, we might take it as practically certain there is none there. But suppose we find out that not one of them had the least experience in prospecting. At once the conclusion becomes doubtful; or rather the question is practically left where it would have been had no search been made. Gould pretended to doubt the real existence of "Robert Padgett, Clerk," because there is no other known mention of him beyond the appearance of his name on the Antiquity Roll. In such a case it is purely a matter of balancing probabilities. An incidental reference, where no motive appears for falsification, gives a strong presumption in favour of what is referred to. Obviously there have lived millions of people of whom no record remains; Padgett may have been one just on the verge of that abyss of total oblivion.

Now the importance of this point in our problem is obvious when it is remembered how largely the argument from silence was used to support the negative conclusions reached by Hughan, so that we must decide what degree of presumption is raised against the existence of any secret ritual by the complete silence of the earlier copies of the Old Charges on this head, and the very vague indications in some later ones. In other words, ought we to expect to find such indications, or mention, either in these legal codes, or in lodge records? If such mention is to be expected, then silence is a strong argument against the existence of any such thing. But if reticence would be natural in regard to such matters in these documents, then silence proves nothing one way or the other. The whole question lies in that point, would or would not reticence have been considered natural and proper; and as we decide this, so will the documents make non-existence seem highly probable, or leave existence undecided. Each must decide this for himself. In our subsequent argument we assume, as one of our postulates, that extreme reticence was natural and fully to be expected.

169BUILDER, 1928, p. 173

One further point may be repeated here. If the negative argument is to be accepted as of weight it must be consistently applied. No more than the legal rule of evidence can it be applied to one thing while another is passed over. The silence of the oldest documents would prove, if accepted as conclusive on the point, not only that there were not two degrees, but that there was no secret initiation at all. Those who use this argument will be forced to the conclusion that not till very late, that is, not till after the decadence of operative masonry and the introduction of a strong non-operative element into the Society or Fraternity, did anything of this kind come into existence. We rather suspect that to most this will seem too drastic.

The position thus resolves itself into a balancing of probabilities. On the one hand the silence of the older documents taken as of positive weight negates any esotericism at all. On the other hand every indication and reference we have from, let us say, the year 1730 back into the past, until details fade into vague obscurity, reveals a highly conservative, traditional organization, whose most striking characteristic is its mysterious ceremonies of admission and its secret signs and tokens. Which of the two arguments is to outweigh the other? Our own conclusion is, we hold, strictly based on acknowledged logical principles a purely negative argument, the argument from silence, cannot stand against positive evidence, no matter how scanty it may be.

Of course in this case positive evidence does not actually carry us back further than the 17th century, or the last decade of the 16th if we accept the oldest Scottish minutes. The rest is inference, but even here the inferences drawn from positive evidence outweigh those drawn from mere silence, especially when that silence is natural and perfectly explicable in the light of the positive evidence. But however this may be decided, and each of our readers must decide it for himself, the inconsistent and illogical position which Hughan slipped into unaware must be avoided. We cannot use the silence of the Old Charges as an argument against the existence of a plurality of degrees unless we also accept it as equally an argument against the existence of any esotericism at all.

THE CRAFT IN THE OLD CHARGES

Having disposed of these preliminaries, and having made, as we hope, the assumptions with which we begin perfectly clear and explicit, we can now proceed to the discussion of the evidence in those points which do not seem to have been fully brought out previously, and to bring all the strands of the argument together.

There is not much more to be said in regard to the Old Charges. They present us with a vague background. They show the antiquity of grades or ranks in the Craft, they differentiate between Masters, Fellows and Apprentices while yet consistently grouping the Masters and Fellows together. Excepting in some late exemplars they give no hint of anything but trade and business secrets. Or rather to be more specific, the charge to keep the privity of hall and bower, or the secrets of the lodge, or the counsels of Masonry, or the private affairs of the master and his wife and family, are consistent with nothing more than that reserve and reticence about private affairs that was so highly regarded in the Middle Ages, so much so that every gild and every town council and royal commission were bound by oath as a matter of course to observe it. Such a clause proves too much if it is taken as in and by itself indicating the existence of a secret ritual and modes of recognition. On the other hand, as we have insisted above, the requirement in no degree excludes the possibility of such things being part of the "privities" and "counsel" of the Craft.

Further, the fact that some of the later and latest MSS., such as the Harleian No. 1942 and No. 2054, the Buchanan; the Grand Lodge No. 2 and the Dumfries Kilwinning No. 4, which have additions and appendages that certainly do point to something esoteric, is equally inconclusive. It is consistent on the one hand with the existence from the first of such secrets; but on the other, it is also quite consistent (by itself) with these having been of recent importation or invention. For these MSS. are of the same period in which definite indications from other sources are found of an esoteric Freemasonry over and above, or in addition to, the Craft "Mystery," which presumably was of the Dame general character as the "mysteries" or "masteries" of other trades [170].

There is one feature, however, of the Mason's Craft as we see it depicted in these ancient documents that stands out in strong contrast to all other trade organizations, and the other gilds and fraternities. It has been mentioned before, but is so important a feature of the background that it must be explicitly stated here. It is what we might call the "universality" of the mason's society or maternity. A "foreign" mason, one from another district, possibly even from another country, was to be received as a brother, and either given work or assisted on his way. Though this proves nothing of itself in regard to anything esoteric, it does give support to, or rather it makes a natural and logical place for, the theory that the Masons, at the least, always possessed secret modes of recognizing each other.

¹⁷⁰It is of course impossible to cite the charges in full here, for what we have in mind is the general impression given by reading a number of them at the same time. Most Masonic histories give one or more versions in full. There are many given in A.Q.C. and Q.C.A., for those with access to the Transactions and Reprints of Quatuor Coronati Lodge. The York Roll No. 1 was republished in THE BUILDER for December 1923. But possibly the best work for the present purpose is Hughan's Old Charges.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF MASTER AND FELLOW

We noted above that these documents presented the craft as composed of three ranks or grades. There is nothing peculiar in this, all trades were so organized. Still it does not necessarily follow that the inter-relations of these ranks or classes were exactly the same in every craft or at every period. In fact, we know certainly that in general they changed materially with the passing of the centuries. The differentiation between workman and master tended to become "a gulf fixed," that if not wholly impassable, was practically so.

The impression given by reading a number of the Old Charges or MS. Constitutions is that the Masters were employers, while the Fellows were journeymen, receiving pay from their masters. In regard to the status of the Apprentice there is no doubt or question. He was in a probationary stage in which he was learning the technique of the Craft, and doing such work as he was capable of in return for his instruction. But though this is the first impression received in regard to Masters and Fellows, a more careful consideration gives rise to doubt whether it was quite so definite and simple as this. The phraseology, even in a single document, is seldom consistent with a fixed and well defined distinction between the two classes, and we may even guess at a process of what (if we suppose it to have been deliberate) might be called "editing." Some versions, and they are on the whole comparatively late, have "Masters" only, where others say "Masters and Fellows." In other instances "Mason," simply, appears where in other exemplars "Master" is used. For example, in the Philipps MS. No. 1 the first of the "Charges singular for Masters and Fellows" is

... that noe maister or fellowe shall take upon him any lords woork ... unless hee know him selfe able and sufficient of eunning to performe the same ...

But in the corresponding passage of the Scarborough Roll we find that

... no Master Shall take upon him any Lords Worke ...

and so on [171]. In itself such a variation as this is too slight to build on very heavily; it is submitted merely as an example of a vagueness in the use of the terms that runs all the way through all the copies of these old codes. As we noted above, this vagueness appears not only as between one version and another, but in each one taken by itself. If Masters alone are spoken of in respect to taking work, the fellows are coupled with the masters in the prohibition of supplanting one who already has charge of a job. Fellows as well as Masters could take apprentices, or so we must judge from the phraseology of the clause dealing with this as it appears in many of the versions. We may quote the Buchanan Roll, which has the following in the sixth of the "Charges singular":

And also that noe master nor ffellow take any apprentice to bee allowed his apprentice any longer than seven yeares and the apprentice to bee able of birth and limbs as hee ought to bee.

The Grand Lodge MS. No. 1 has in the same place:

And also that no mrs and ffellowes take no prentiee but for the terme of vij yeres [172].

¹⁷¹O.C.A., Vol. v.

¹⁷²The Buchanan and Grand Lodge MSS. are both to be found in Q.C.A. The first in Part III, p. vi, and the second in Part I, p. vii.

The Buchanan version, and some others, make what seems to be a manifest error in saying the period was not to be any longer than seven years. The object of the provision, as appears plainly from a consensus of readings, is that apprenticeship should not be for a less period. The Buchanan MS. is dated circa 1670, and as a pure matter of speculation, one might wonder if possibly this change was made in lodges of prevailingly non-operative membership, in which apprenticeship would, at most, be a matter of form [173].

Other MSS., such as the Harris No. 2 and the Cama, say "No Mason" is to take an apprentice, instead of "No Master or fellow," thus apparently equating Masters and Fellows under the general head of Masons. On the other hand a number of versions omit "Fellow" here, and say merely that "no Master" is to "take an apprentice" except under the usual conditions. Among these is the very ancient Matthew Cooke MS., though the William Watson, which is supposed to be a descendant from the same original, has "Masters and Fellows."

The Grand Lodge MS. No. 2, with others of its family, has another reading altogether in this place. The nouns are replaced by the personal pronoun; "You shall not take an apprentice," and so on. In most versions this rule appears in the "charges singular for Masters and Fellows" following the "Charges general," but in the MS. just quoted, and those of the same family, the charges general and singular are not differentiated, though they appear consecutively in the same order as in the other versions. In this MS. the address of the administrator is to his "Loving friends and brothers," who are exhorted to "be careful in the observation of these articles" which he is about to read to this deponent." The deponent is evidently the person who is being made a Mason, and this raises another question which will-have to be considered next in order.

These citations may perhaps seem-rather irrelevant as well as tedious, but in view of the widely differing conceptions that have been expressed as to the distinction between these generic terms, Master and Fellow, it is necessary to try to reach some definite conclusion on the point before proceeding further, for otherwise to come to even a tentative agreement is impossible. We may say then, and our readers must go to the documents themselves if they wish to be sure how far this is justified, that the impression given by the Old Charges as a whole is that there was no hard and fast distinction between the Masters and Fellows. No more, let us say, than between a foreman and a skilled mechanic in a machine shop today. Both had the same training, both shad the same qualifications. The difference was, so to speak, an external and economic one, and not one of rank or status. Further, these old codes are quite consistent with, that is, nothing in them excludes, the use of the term "Master" in the same sense in which, according to the late Bro. Condor, it was used in the records of the Masons Company. In these the apprentice at the end of his servitude took up the mastership of the Craft, although it was obvious that he was not a master either in the sense of an employer, or of a director of labor [174].

¹⁷³We are not very sure of this. Time and opportunity have been lacking to find out how many versions have this reading. The Atchison Haven minute book contains the same inversion of the normal requirement, in identical words. It is dated 1666 approximately the same date as the Buchanan MS. Could it have been a repealing of the clause in the Shaw statutes, which requires a second period of seven years before the apprentice could be made "brother and fellow in craft"?

¹⁷⁴THE BUILDER, Oct., 1928, p. 300.

THE APPRENTICE ALLOWED

In any case, whether this be admitted or not, it is clear that Masters and Fellows were grouped together in sharp distinction to the Apprentices, and we now have to consider the question mentioned above. Who was it who received the Charges? Most of the documents are quite explicit that they were to be read when 'any Mason" should be "made." But this only changes the form of the question, who were made Masons? Or, what did making a Mason imply? That is, putting it specifically, was it the apprentice who was "made," when he was "allowed" to be an apprentice, according to the rules of the Craft? And these may have been far more stringent than the external regulations imposed by civil authority. At least such distinction may be implied by the phrase

... to take any apprentice to be allowed his apprentice ...

Or, on the other hand, was it the Apprentice who had served his time and was now being made free of the Craft?

Though it has quite generally been taken that "making" occurred at the beginning of the Apprenticeship, we believe that a retreading of most of the documents will give the contrary impression, that it was at the end of that period of pupilage that men were made masons, and "charged." But this conclusion, however, is not compulsory, the references are too vague to give more than an impression; while it must be admitted that some versions, the William Watson MS. for one, give a contrary impression. This, as was pointed out by Bro. Dring [175], seems to make a distinction between "making" Masons, and "receiving" Fellows. The passage occurs at the end of the account of the great Assembly at York under Prince Edwin, with which the Legend of the Craft normally concludes. The usual version is that it was ordered that the Charges, as then collected and codified, should "be read or told when any mason should be made." The Watson MS. has a more expanded statement of which the following is the passage especially pertinent in the present connection.

In England, right worshipful masters & fellowes yt been of divers Semblies and congregations with ye consent of ye Lords this Realme hath ordained & made charges by their best advise yt all manner of men yt shall be made and allowed Masons, must be sworne upon a booke to keep the same in all yt they may to ye uttermost of their power, & alsoe they have ordained yt when any ffellow shall be received & allowed yt these charges might be read unto him & he take his charges ...[176]

At first sight this seems conclusive that "making and allowing" Masons was a different thing from "receiving and allowing" Fellows. But further consideration gives rise to doubts. The double application of the term "allow" is curious, and the contrast made is apparently between Masons and Fellows, not Apprentices and Fellows; and as we have already seen "Mason" was used in other cases as an alternative and inclusive term for Masters and Fellows, our doubt is still further increased. As a matter of fact, in none of these documents, so far as we have discovered, is an Apprentice definitely and unequivocally said to be a Mason, or spoken of as a Mason, not even those that contain the "New Articles" and the "Apprentice Charges." It has naturally been taken for granted (and we do not say incorrectly) that, seeing that since 1730 "Making a Mason" has been used as

175Ibid, 1929, Feb., p. 37. 176Q.C.A., Vol. iii, Part iv.

synonymous with "Entering an Apprentice," it also means the same thing before 1700. All that it is desired to point out here is that there is nothing in the Old Charges themselves to indicate such an interpretation.

There is, so far as we know, just one exception to this general silence upon this fundamental point. The Operative Lodge at Swalwell, the "Orders" of which were written into the records on Sept. 29, 1701 possessed certain "Apprentice Orders" which begin thus:

Forasmuch as you are contracted and Bound to one of our Brethren: we are here assembled together with one Accord, to declare unto you the Laudable Dutys appertaining to those yt are Apprentices, to those who are of the Lodge of Masonry which if you will take good heed unto and keep, will find the same worthy your regard for a Worthy Seienee, ffor at the building of the Tower of Babylon ...

The rest is a very abbreviated and compressed recapitulation of some of the chief heads of the "Legend of the Craft."

We find also in the fifth of the "Orders" of the "Company and Fellowship" of Alnwick that ... noe mason shall take any Apprentice [but he must] enter him and give him his charge within one whole year after.

The corresponding regulation at Swalwell was less definite.

When any mason shall take an APPRENTICE he shall enter him in the Company's Records within 40 days ... [177]

And all this really seems to complicate matters still more. Was this "entering" anything at all equivalent, on the one hand, to the "entering" practiced in Speculative Lodges after the critical period? And on the other, was it the same thing as an Apprentice being "allowed," as specified in the Old Charges generally in the regulation concerning them? But whether either or both or neither, one thing does seem to follow, that at Alnwick not the "Old Charges," but an abbreviated synopsis of the introductory portion with special Apprentice Charges were used at entering. And then rises the question, was this peculiar to Alnwick, or was it representative? It is rather curious, in view of this vagueness and indetermination, that it should have been so generally and so confidently assumed that the Legend and Charges were read to the Apprentice and that this composed the main part of the ceremony of entering. This as much by the proponents of the single initiation theory as by those who have opposed it. Really, if we had nothing else to build upon, the most natural hypothesis would be that there was only one ceremony, which came at the end of the Apprenticeship, not at the beginning. Yet that clause, which appears again and again, "that no master or fellow take no apprentice to be allowed his apprentice," would always return like Banquo's ghost to give rise to doubt.

The Old Charges, we may sum up, give us an indistinct background and nothing more. We must now go on and see if the many alternatives they leave open can to some extent be reduced by other lines of evidence.

¹⁷⁷Gould. History, Vol. iii, pp. 14-16.

THE EARLY ALLUSIONS TO MASONRY

We may as well take next the third heading into which we divided the evidence, for the reason that it is fairly simple and can be shortly considered and dismissed. With the various hearsay and "profane" references may be grouped the personal ones of individual Masons, Randle Holme, Ashmole and Stukeley. Ashmole gives us the terms "made a Freemason" and "admitted into the Fellowship of Freemasons" which seem to be used by him as synonymous [178]. While Stukeley's remark in his Autobiography that he was induced by curiosity to become a mason, as he suspected it "to be the remains of the mysterys of the ancients," show definitely, only far too late to be of very great value, that the world at large was more or less aware of a mysterious ritual practiced by the Masonic Fraternity. On this point Plot and Aubrey are of greater service, though both of course wrote as outsiders. Plot may or may not have had more information than the Masons of the day would willingly have allowed him, but the references to "secret signed and their efficacy in bringing "a Fellow of the Society, whom they otherwise call an accepted muson," even from "the top of a Steeple," do not put this beyond doubt. It is quite possible that all this had become part of a popular body of information, and misinformation, about the Free Masons.

Indeed we would be inclined to think that before the Reformation the members of the Craft kept their secrets so well that few outside even suspected that there were any. This would have been fully in accord with the manners of the Middle Ages; which it is very probable were soundly based on a lively sense of the need for caution. Governments and governors were paternal and inquisitorial; anything that was secret savoured of treason, heresy and witchcraft as a matter of course. It is quite possible that after the Reformation had become established in Britain, and in conjunction with the co-incident decay of the operative craft, and the growing numbers of non-operative "accepted" Fellows of the old Fraternity, that individual members relaxed to some extent the absolute silence heretofore maintained, and may even have enjoyed mystifying their non-Masonic acquaintance with cryptic utterances, just as some good brethren do today.

But we are perhaps going too fast, and assuming what is yet (if possible) to be proved. These references do show that the masons had secret signs and ceremonies before the Grand Lodge era, but hardly enough earlier to exclude all possibility that they were then of comparatively recent introduction or invention, and perhaps due to the non-operative members of the Craft.

¹⁷⁸Gould. Concise History (Revised), pp. 112 and 116 (241 and 245 in American Edition).

PART 14

WE now come to the consideration of the second division of the evidence, the old lodge records.

It will, fortunately, not be necessary to bring forward very much that has not already been discussed, with the exception of the Aitchison's Haven minutes, which will have to be cited in their place. The great bulk of these records are Scottish; for, beyond York and Alnwick, none exist in England earlier than 1717, and none at all before 1700. Those of Alnwick beginning in 1701 apparently and those of York in 1712 [179].

This state of affairs, which Hughan found inexplicable [180], makes it essential that the question of the relation of Scottish to English Masonry before the Grand Lodge era should be fully canvassed before we can proceed with much hope of arriving at safe conclusions; for as Gould says, there is far more involved in the reply made to this question than at first sight appears [181]. We have already had it before us, and we have sufficiently indicated our own views [182], but the point is too important to be left with a mere expression of opinion. The situation may be thus described; Gould as learned counsel presented an argument based on the brief provided by Lyon. The conclusions he reached seem to have been accepted by everyone as final. Fortunately, to continue the legal metaphor, there is no statute of limitations in such matters, and no judgment at the bar of scholarship is beyond reconsideration and revision.

Gould treated this question in the sixteenth chapter of his history. While it seems fairly certain that he had not then been converted to the theory of the existence of a plurality of degrees before 1717, yet he does not ever seem to have relaxed in the least his conclusion that Scotch and English Masonry were so different that, judging by some expressions, there was really nothing in common between them. As, for example, when he tells us that the "old Scottish Mason Word is unknown" and that there is nothing to show whether it was ever, before 1736, the same as anything used in England.

Owing to his discursive style of writing this chapter requires careful reading and close attention to disentangle the various steps of his argument. As a whole it makes a general advance over the terrain of Early British Freemasonry. First one feature and then another is taken up. This tends to conceal whatever weaknesses there may be in the argument on this particular point. For in one place we are promised further discussion later on, and then we are referred back to what was said earlier. The chapter should be re-read in conjunction with this criticism, so that our analysis may be checked [183]. To give our own impressions quite frankly, it might be likened to a trial where a clever rogue is acquitted because there

¹⁷⁹Gould, History, Vol. iii, p. 13; and Rylands, A. Q. C., Vol. xiv, p. 6, for Alnwick. Gould, op. cit., p. 23, for York; also Hughan Masonic Sketches and Reprints, pp. 34-35. We have not been able to refer to the reproduction of the Alnwick minutes published in 1896.

¹⁸⁰Hughan, Op cit., p. 19.

¹⁸¹Gould, op. cit., iii, p. 10.

¹⁸²THE BUILDER, 1928, pp. 135, 170, 299, 332, 333; and 1929, pp. 19? 36 and 68.

¹⁸³Gould, History, vol. iii, Chap. xvi. The argument begins on page 10, is touched on in pages 12 and 13, taken up again at pages 29 and 30. From pages 48 to 56 is an outline of Scottish history and its bearing on the existence of the Mason's craft, concluded in pages 58 to 63. Pages 10, 29 and 30 should be read in conjunction with 62 and 63, so far as Haughfoot and Dunblane are concerned.

is insufficient legal evidence against him, although every one, judge, jurors and counsel, are quite certain of his guilt. Or putting it less figuratively, Gould so limited and restricted the significance of the facts that it was impossible to arrive at anything but a negative conclusion.	

THE CHARACTER OF EARLY SCOTTISH MASONRY

The essentials of his argument seem to be the following: It is pointed out that the scanty traces of lodge activities in England prior to the eighteenth century seem to reveal only speculative (or more accurately, non-operative) bodies; with possibly, of course, some operative Masons in the membership. Only one exception to this rule exists, the operative lodge at Alnwick. But it is not properly included in the period as the existing minutes do not begin until 1701. Besides it was close to the Scottish border, and might well have been of Scottish derivation.

On the other hand, the comparative wealth of records in Scotland reveals an organization, wholly operative in character, though including a considerable number of honorary and non-operative members, in some lodges, indeed, a majority. Again there is just one exception, the lodge at Haughfoot. But this also is close to the border, and might have derived its ritual from England; and besides, like Alnwick, it is too late to be included in the period, as its earliest records do not begin till December, 1702. It is insisted that, in spite of possible inferences from the Old Charges, there is no proof, outside of Alnwick, that there ever was an operative lodge in England. Thus a presumption is raised in the reader's mind that these two exceptional cases in effect cancel each other out. The one really Scottish though in England, and the other having an English character though in Scotland.

As we have stated earlier [184], Gould went beyond Lyon in his interpretation of the phrase "the Mason Word." Lyon had said that it was evident, from the Dunblane record, that "this talisman consisted of something more than a word." This Gould refused to accept, standing on the literal meaning of the phrase. [185] The Haughfoot reference to a grip he dismisses summarily as abnormal [186]. The reference in the Dunblane minutes to "the secrets of the Mason Word" is then evacuated of its apparent meaning by the following argument.

On Dec. 27, 1729, two Entered Apprentices from Kilwinning desired to join the lodge of Dunblane and be passed as fellows of Craft. This petition

... being considered by the members of Court [i.e. of the Lodge] they ordain James Muschet to examine them as to their qualifications and knowledge, who having reported to the Lodge that they had a competent knowledge of the secrets of the Mason Word, then the said Lodge, after entering them apprentiees pass them to be fellows of craft of this Lodge $\lceil^{187}\rceil$.

However (according to Gould [188]) this really means little (or nothing) because, even so late as 1735 the Kilwinning "ceremony of initiation was so simple" that two persons, in that year, were "received into Masonry by individual operators at a distance from the lodge," and "being found" in lawful possession of the word "were recognized as members of Mother Kilwinning.

¹⁸⁴THE BUILDER, 1928, p. 332.

¹⁸⁵ It is possible, however, that in his cryptic manner, Gould here only intended to convey the fact that nothing more than this was proven by the evidence.

¹⁸⁶Gould, op. cit., vol. iii pp. 29, 30 and 36.

¹⁸⁷Lyon Hist. Edin., p. 417.

¹⁸⁸Gould, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 63.

Criticism Of Gould's Arguments

This seems to be the real substantial argument offered by Gould in support of his position. Naturally, clothed in literary form, with the aid of forensic rhetoric, and with its weak places concealed by the many breaks in carrying it through to a conclusion, it appears much more convincing than in this summary. Whether this last is really a just analysis and exposition or not, must be left to our readers to judge for themselves. To us it seems that the logical fallacies of the argument are so obvious as to scarcely need pointing out. We have just as much right to insist that the last mentioned incident proves that "possession of the word" at Kilwinning included the "secrets of the word" spoken of at Dunblane, as the reverse. We are in fact faced with the negative argument in an acute form. And when we consider the practical side of the question, it is seen that the inference last suggested gives the most probable result. Gould presumably understood the "benefit of the mason word" to mean the obtaining recognition as a mason among strangers. Upon reflection it will be obvious that a single word, with nothing leading up to it, would be totally inadequate for this purpose, unless, like military watch words, it were changed very frequently. Even then, there would have to be some rules as to how it was given. Gould appeals to universal silence. But the silence is not universal, for there are the exceptions. And as we have insisted at painful length, one positive instance is sufficient, logically, to overbalance the negative weight of an otherwise complete silence. Of course such a single instance must be "exceptional" as long as it stands alone. To so describe it does not reduce its force, as Gould seemed to think. To do that some other consideration would have to be brought forward to show why it should not be accepted. This indeed he tried to do by the suggested doubt raised by date and locality, but these have no weight unless we admit that the difference which he assumed between English and Scottish Masonry really did exist in this radical form.

Of course Gould [189] was too careful to state these conclusions positively, as being compulsorily required by the evidence; and we have always to bear in mind that the only alternative to this position which then presented itself was practically the acceptance of the traditional position of the antiquity of our present system and ritual. We have no desire to call in question the value of Gould's work. He cleared the ground and laid the foundations; we are only trying to continue the building where he left off. We are not demolishing any part of the structure he reared, but removing some of the scaffolding for which there is now no need.

We must go a little further, however. In the course of this argument Gould lay great stress on the date. The suggestion was that Alnwick, Haughfoot and Dunblane could tell us nothing of the state of affairs in the seventeenth century. This sounds impressive, but there is a kind of fallacy in it. Centuries, after all, are artificial periods. We may compare one with another, as wholes, just as we may compare one month with another. March is windy, April is showery. But the last week of March may be rainy and there may be high winds early in April. We cannot, without fallacy, separate the last years of the seventeenth century from the beginning of the eighteenth. There is this just kernel of truth in the suggestion created by Gould's classification of the evidence by centuries; that we can only infer the existence of a thing before the date of its being first definitely mentioned. Yet in

189Ibid., vol. iii, p. 30. Compare also vol. ii, p. 51.

this case such inference is sound enough when the whole nature of the phenomena is considered, and especially the intensely conservative and traditional nature of the institution. And we need only ask that a very few years of previous existence be inferred to carry things back over the fatal (artificial) line drawn between 1699 and 1700.

That there was a difference between English and Scottish Masonry we willingly admit, and Gould has the credit for having pointed it out. It was a difference of organization and function. Where we hold that he was mistaken, and indeed went beyond legitimate inference from the evidence, is in the assumption that this external difference implied equally great differences on the esoteric side. We know that very great differences of organization during the strictly historic period, even down to the present day, have not involved differences in ritual to the point of making recognition impossible. Variations exist now, and very likely existed then to an even greater degree than now, but that is not the same thing at all [190].

¹⁹⁰Every institution must perforce adapt itself to the conditions of the society in which it exists. Thus we find that every organization of more than local scope will exhibit variations, and the wider it is spread the greater these variations will be. In Scotland the lodges retained the quasi-legal status of the gilds which it is possible that the English lodges had before the fourteenth century. And it is possible that in Scotland the lodges filled the place of gilds to some extent, as that form of organization arrived later in the northern kingdom than in England. The Statutes of Laborers in England undoubtedly had some effect on the general situation, although their frequent re- enactment proves that they were as difficult to enforce as some more recent laws of prohibitory character. But the law of Henry VI which definitely forbade the Masons "to confederate themselves in Chapters and Assemblies" would undoubtedly destroy any external authority that custom and usage may have given such organizations, and would tend to drive the lodges underground. This would quite naturally account for our finding so few traces of permanent lodges in England, and no records at all before the eighteenth century. Records are a constant source of danger to an illicit organization, and casual lodges would have no use for them in any ease.

English And Scottish Masonry Esoterically Identical

Although Scotchmen will doubtless repudiate the idea with vigour, and perhaps with heat, historically the English speaking people of Britain have a common origin and culture. The Lowlanders of Scotland are ethnologically the same race in the main as the inhabitants of the north of England. That there was ever a division between them was a political accident, largely due, it is probable, to geography. The natural assumption is that Scottish Masonry would be derived from England. There is no need to go over in detail the minor features that are common. Just one thing may be mentioned, and that is the fact that a good number of copies of the MS. charges have been found in the possession of many of the old Scotch lodges. When therefore the argument against recognizable likeness and close relationship between the Masonries of the two countries has been countered, the original and natural assumption, that internally they were closely related, once more takes its place.

There is one more argument that may be brought forward. Scottish minutes go on speaking of the "Mason Word" years after Desaguliers' visit to Mary's Chapel, where he, a London Mason, was examined and "found duly qualified in all points of Masonry." This hardly bears out the minimal interpretation of the phrase insisted on by Gould; and, once we are free of that presumption, the possibilities are unlimited. Scottish forms, under the influence of extreme Protestantism may have been, and very probably were, subjected to a process of deletion in some places, each lodge being a law to itself, but not to the point of making intercommunication impossible [191]. There may also have been a process of decay and atrophy. Gould gives a sketch of Scottish history, dwelling on the many invasions the country endured, most of them accompanied by complete devastation of towns and countryside alike; and the unexpressed suggestion is given that as the arts and crafts generally declined the esoteric side of Masonry would also decay and be forgotten. This does not necessarily follow. Men could remember and transmit signs and tokens and secret catechisms even though practically debarred from exercising their craft. The process of decay would probably, we think, affect England equally. It would be merely another example of the gradual change of institutions; and one of its effects might well have been that alleged fusing of two grades into one in some non operative lodges in England in the seventeenth century which Speth suggested.

Such "reforms" might well have taken place in other lodges at an earlier date.

We have thus given our reasons for refusing to admit that the external differences of organization and function in the two countries in the seventeenth century necessarily require us to postulate equally radical differences on the esoteric side. Our contention is that the attempt to prove such differences breaks down under critical examination. There must have been, in the nature of things this much we may assume geographical variations, both local and regional, just as there must have been secular changes in the passing of the

¹⁹¹ So late as 1764 such a revision seems to have been made. In the second edition of his History of the Lodge of Edinburgh (Chap. iv) Lyon gives the following excerpt from the minutes of the Old Lodge of Melrose, which remained independent till well on towards the end of the nineteenth century. The Melrose brethren, it seems, decided:

[&]quot;That the Mason word be administered in a simple way and manner, free of everything sinful and superstitious, only word, sign and grip, and some simple questions to distinguish a Mason from another man, and all under a promise not to reveal it, under no less a penalty than to forfeit all right and title to every benefit belonging to the lodge, and to be held in abhorrence by every brother."

years. But equally, on the other hand, the intercommunication, indications of which are everywhere frequent, and the conservatism which so strongly characterized members of the Craft, must have had a strong stabilizing effect. Like an army on the march, with scouting and foraging parties on the flanks, the vanguard far ahead while the rearguard lags behind, nevertheless the organization may be supposed to have retained coherence, and to have evolved along the same lines in different places and at different rates. We say supposed, deliberately, because it is not proved, nor can it be disproved beyond all shadow of doubt. The dictum of Huxley, quoted by Gould himself, regarding that "postulate of loose thinkers; that what may have happened must have happened," is a warning. Yet there is its converse, which Bro. Tuckett has more recently enunciated; the unconscious postulate that the critically minded often assume; that what cannot be proved cannot have happened - the pitfall of the negative argument, in other words [192]. In view of all which we hold that we may assume, not only as possible, but to some degree probable, that the Masons of the two countries employed substantially the same ritual forms and possessed in essentials the same secrets. Upon this assumption we will proceed.

¹⁹²A. Q. C. vol. x, p. 52.

THE TERMINOLOGY OF THE OLD RECORDS

First we will recall that in our consideration of the Old Charges we saw that they pointed to a definite dividing line between apprentices and the skilled Fellows and Masters. Further, it appears that (though far from consistently) there was a tendency to employ different terms for changing the status of the individual. An apprentice was "allowed" according to some versions, but a Mason was "made," and a Fellow was "received." Any interpretation of these vague indications by themselves is mere guesswork. But they may fit into a scheme suggested by other facts. The Schlaw Statutes and the Orders of the lodge at Alnwick do give some further precision to the hazy impression received. According to the former the apprentice was "taken" by his master; "received" either by his master or the lodge, or by both for this is not clear and "entered" to the lodge- or in the lodge records for again it is not clear. On the other hand it is quite clear that a master or fellow was "received and admitted" into the lodge; and this "admission" must almost certainly, from the way it is spoken of, have been formal in character.

At Alnwick [193] we saw that the apprentice was "entered" and "given his charge," while "Masons" were "made free," and apprentices at the end of their servitude were "admitted or accepted." Again we have the same vagueness as appeared in the Old Charges, yet an outline begins to appear, as in a clearing mist. Remembering, as we saw last month [194], that "Mason" was apparently used, sometimes, at least, as an inclusive term for the more particular designations "Master" and "Fellows," it begins to look dimly as if an apprentice was taken and allowed or entered, and at the end of his term was made free by being admitted or accepted as a fellow or master, or alternatively, made a Mason. At York the "Old Rules" of 1725 speak only of a "Mason" or "Brother" being "made," there being no reference at all to apprentices.

Coming back to Scotland [195] we find the Statutes "ordeined" by the Lodge of Aberdeen, in 1670, giving the conditions under which an "Entering prenteise" is to be "reciaved." "Master meassons" are said to be "made," and apprentices at the end of their time are to "receave the fellowship." The last is also spoken of as getting his fellowship.

¹⁹³Gould, Hist., vol. iii, pp. 14-15. The Alnwick Orders are dated Sept. 29, 1701, the "Gen'll Head Meeting Day" of the Lodge. The 5th Order has already been quoted, BUILDER, May, p. 141. The other relevant passages are:

[&]quot;9th. Item. There shall noe apprentice after he have served seaven years be admitted or accepted but upon the Feast of St. Michael...

[&]quot;12th. Item. Thatt noe Fellow or Fellows within this Lodge shall att any time or times call or hold Assemblies to make any mason or masons free Not acquainting the Master of Wardens

[&]quot;13th. Item. That noe rough Layers or any others thatt has nott served their time or [been] admitted, shall work within the lodge ..."

We have here the term "accepted" equated with "admitted" and possibly with "make free" also. 194THE BUILDER, May, 1929, p. 131.

¹⁹⁵It will be more convenient to give the references in the text altogether here, as it would otherwise entail much quite needless repetition. For Aberdeen, Miller, Notes on the Early History and Records of the Lodge, Aberdeen, pp. 61-63. Also Lyon, History of the Lodge of Edinburgh p. 423. The same chapter contains extracts from the records of Kilwinning, Glasgow Dunblane and Peebles. For Haughfoot, Yarker, A. Q. C., vol. xxvi, p. 16 - and for Aitchison's Haven, Wallace-James, Ibid., vol. xxiv, p. 30. See also Gould, op. cit., vol. iii.

"Mother" Kilwinning in 1643 wrote into its records the clause of the Schaw Statutes relating to the passing of fellows. In 1646 four persons, one a Mason of Paisley, were accepted as "fellow brethren to the said trade"; the meetings being described as "Courts of the Mason trade of the lodge of Kilwinning." This entry probably relates to what we should call affiliation. The next item is to the effect that five individuals, who are named, were received as "prenteisses to ye said craft."

At Glasgow, on the first day of the year 1613, John Stewart younger, apprentice to John Stewart elder, was "entered" by the Warden and Brethren, "conform to the acts and liberty of the Lodge," whatever that meant precisely to the clerk who wrote it. The earliest extant minute of the Lodge of Dunblane is dated January, 1696. In December of that year the members "ordained" a scale of fees to be paid by those wishing to join; "at their entrey six punds, and att their passing thrie punds Scots, with the ordinar dues." Twenty years later, in 1716, it was enacted that "there be no meassons or uthers entered and past by the members of this Lodge at one and the same time," excepting only "such gentlemen" who could not be present at a "second diet." Instead, those "entered" were to be "first reported prentises, and their passing ordered by the Lodge thereafter according to qualifications." Evidently the "entering" was generally done by a group of members of the lodge at their own convenience, as was apparently quite customary in Scotland at the period, and possibly in England, too.

Dec. 27, 1720, is the first of the minutes of the admissions of fellows of craft that contain the peculiar reference to the square and compass which for a number of years was regularly used by the Secretary of Dunlblane Lodge. It is worth quoting in full:

Compared John Gillespie, writer in Dunblane, who was entered on the 24 instant, and after examination was duely passt from the Square to the Compass, and from ane Entered Prentiee to a Fellow of Craft of the Lodge.

While the date of this is later than the formation of the Grand Lodge in London, yet it is hardly likely that the ripples created by that event could have had much effect in Scotland in the short interval of three years. For the present, however, we will pass on as this calls for further consideration later. Only it may be said that the phrase can hardly mean anything aside from some ceremonial to which it was a veiled reference.

The Lodge of Peebles seems to have been deliberately founded by the members of the "Honorable company of Masons" of that place, who took

... into their consideration the great loss they have hitherto sustained by want of a Lodge, and finding a sufficient number of Brethreen in this Burgh, did this day [Oct. 18 1716] erect a lodge amongst themselves within the said Burgh.

This makes one wonder just what the "great loss" was that they had sustained. It could hardly have been a business or financial one, as the Company or Gild should have been sufficient for such matters. It seems as if it might be a curious parallel to the "Accepcon" in the London Mason's Company. However that may be, in December the same year, 1716, William Brotherstanes was "decently and orderly" entered; while Alexander Veitch, an "enter'd prentise, made application" to the lodge and was "received." Minutes of later years up to 1725 speak of Apprentices being entered, and other persons being "received and admitted," (apparently in most cases non-operatives who were made fellows at once. But

this is not absolutely certain in every case.) A peculiarity of these minutes is that we are frequently told that these "enterings" and "admissions" were "decently and orderly" performed, which can hardly refer to anything but some ceremonial.

The minute book of the Lodge at Haughfoot begins in December of 1702, but the first ten pages have been torn out, and it is strongly to be suspected that they contained, if not a ritual, at least ritual memoranda. In 1704 William Cairncross "gave in his petition" to be associated with the lodge, and was examined and found to be a "true entered Apprentice and Fellowcraft." This shortened form of the usual term "Fellow of Craft" was used also at Aberdeen, whence it was probably transplanted to London by Dr. Anderson, and thence, through the medium of the Book of Constitutions, it has spread over the whole Masonic world.

On St. John's Day, 1706, "John Scott, brother of Sir James Scott of Gala, was orderly admitted to the Society of Apprentice and Felllowcraft." A year later a similar rule to that of Dunblane was made. The "meeting" having come

... to a general resolution that in time coming they would not, except on special considerations, admitt to the Society both of apprentice and fellowcraft, at the same tyme, but that one year at least should intervene betwixt any being admitted apprentice and his being entered fellowcraft.

Here we have another of the puzzling variations in terminology. It is practically certain that in this exceptional lodge (which has been taken by many students as exceptional in the sense of being sui generis) there were two ceremonies used throughout its existence. But the term "enter" is used for the higher grade and "admission" for the lower, the exact opposite to what we have been coming to accept as the normal terminology of the period.

We come finally to the minutes of the Lodge of Aitchison's Haven. These begin in the year before the earliest extant minutes of Mary's Chapel at Edinburgh, and the first entry records that "Robert Widderspone was maid fellow of Craft" in the presence of "John Fender the Warden," and seven other fellows of craft. No apprentices are mentioned. This of course does not prove that none were present, especially as the Warden was one of those who signed the Shaw Statutes which insisted that two apprentices were required at the admission of fellows of craft.

The omission was remedied on later occasions, however, as on May 28, 1599, "Johne Low was maid fellow of Craft in ye presence of Johne Fender Warden for ye present," followed by the names of six others, who are said to be "all fellows of Craft," and then comes "also of enterit Drentis Richart Petticrief [and] James Petticrief." So that the lodge was formed of seven fellows with the two apprentices that, as we have seen, were so insistently required by the Shaw Statutes.

The second minute in the book, January 11, 1598, records that "Alexander Cubie was enterit prenteis to Georg Aytoune." Two years later, Jan. 2, 1600, we find Alexander Culbie chosen by "Andro Pattene" as one of his intenders, the said Andrew being "enterit prenteis to Johne Crafurd his maister," having paid twenty shillings for "his boukin," or fee for registration, and given gloves to his "admitteris," who included six fellows and four apprentices.

These minutes favour the term "maid fellow of craft" for the higher status, but while frequently using the term "enterit" in regard to apprentices, this is varied by the expression "buikit," booked or recorded. This definitely raises the question, which has already hovered in the background, as it were, more than once; was the "entering" of an apprentice anything more than formal registration in the lodge records, in the presence of its members as witnesses? For the present we leave it without attempting an answer, though it may be noted that in some places mention is made also of the "buiking," or paying the fee therefore when fellows were "maid."

It is evident that where men's professional or occupational status is affected records must be kept. And as we have already noted, in Scotland membership in a lodge was as important to a working stone mason then as membership in a Trade Union is at the present day to the skilled workman in such trades as are fully "unionized." It is this that accounts for the fact that Scottish lodges not only made records, but preserved them also. But further than this, it also accounts for their general character. They are concerned mainly with those things that affected the rights and seniority of the members of the lodge, and for this reason it is only incidentally, and as it were by accident, that they ever tell us anything about those traditions and customs in which we are chiefly interested, all of which gives us an additional reason for being very wary of the negative argument here.

It shows the difficulty of the subject that Gould quite overlooked the significance of the record concerning William Cairncross at Haughfoot, quoted above. The phraseology irresistibly suggests that he was examined not only as an apprentice, but also as a fellow craft. But this once granted implies that this lodge was not ritually exceptional, but that there was a real community between it and the lodge in which Cairncross was entered and accepted.

Our developing picture is now a little clearer; the lines are still vague and misty, but like a composite photograph certain features begin to stand out. The difference in status between apprentices and full Masons, i. e., Masters and Fellows, Which the Old Charges clearly indicated, seem, in Scotland, at least in the seventeenth century, to have been marked by certain formalities, generally referred to respectively, as entering, and admitting or receiving.

PART 15

WE will now have to traverse once more the same ground [196], this time in order to bring out another feature characteristic of old Scottish Masonic usage, as that is exhibited in the records of the ancient lodges of that country. The often quoted clause of the Schaw Statutes relating to the admission of Fellows, requires, among its other provisions, that the reception or admission should be duly recorded, "ord'rlie buikit," in the lodge books, and that

... the names of the intendaris that Salt be chosin to evrie persone to be alsua insert in thair buik.

The interpretation of this is a matter open to some doubt. The indefinite phrase "shall be chosen to [for] every person" leaves us uncertain whether the intenders had been the official instructors of the apprentice who was then being "received or admitted," or whether they were then chosen to instruct the newly made fellow of craft, as such. A good deal depends on the answer we give to this.

It is to be remarked that the minutes of the Lodge of Edinburgh do not seem to mention intenders [197], so that we are unable to say whether they were appointed there or not. This metropolitan lodge, however, seems as exceptional in its way as Dunblane or Haughfoot were in theirs. This is only one feature in which it differed from other lodges. But the most marked and characteristic difference was the sharp cleavage between employers and employed, the former seemingly to have been well on the way to becoming a caste apart. In none of the other lodges does this strong distinction appear; indeed, in the Aitchison's Haven Lodge the term "Masters" is hardly ever used in speaking of the composition of the lodge. In the excerpts published by Bro. R. E. Wallace-James, the usual formula is "the brethren," or "the brethren of the lodge," when speaking collectively, or "fellow of craft," when they are mentioned by name.

¹⁹⁶See BUILDER, May, p. 168, note 17. To the works there cited should have been added W. F. Vernon, History of Freemasonry in the Province of Roxburgh Peebles and Selkirkshire.

197That is, so far as can be judged from such excerpts as have been published.

THE PROBLEM OF THE INTENDERS

The first example we will take of the appointment of intenders is that of the "entry" of William Brotherstains at Peebles in 1716, which has already been cited. He chose for his intenders, David and Richard Whyts, who were fellows of craft and masters of the lodge. Alexander Veitch, described as "enter'd prentise," was "received" on the same date, presumably as a fellow of craft seeing that he was already "entered." So that it is evident that intenders were appointed both for the newly entered apprentice, and the master or fellow craft who was received. The appointment of intenders was regularly recorded in this lodge, but there is no need to quote further and later instances.

At Aberdeen a special article appears in the Statutes forbidding any member of the lodge to ... teach or instruct ane entered prentise untill such tyme as he be perfyted be his Intender.

But when

His Intender and his Maate gives him over as being taught any person hath liberty to teach him anything he forgets.

And then it is enacted that if, when the apprentice "is interrogat at our publict meetings" [i.e., general meetings of the lodge] he has forgotten anything "he must pay for it," unless he could show it was something he had not been taught, in which case the intender was fined instead.

But there is nothing here to show who the apprentice's intenders were; that is, whether they were also apprentices or fellows. Fortunately the Aitchison's Haven minutes make this quite clear. In the second minute, which has already been cited, the entrant, Alexander Cubie, chose two intenders who are expressly stated to have been Apprentices. The minute gives the names of the fellows of craft, and then those of four apprentices. and adds

... of ye quhilk enterit prentiseis Alexander Cubie chois Archibald Glene and James Pettiecrief to be his instructoris. .

As we have already seen, in quoting these minutes before, Alexander Cubie was chosen two years later by Andrew Patten as one of his intenders, Cubie being himself still an apprentice. But this is not all. Robert Widderspone, who was made a fellow of craft two days before Cubie was entered an apprentice, is recorded as choosing George Aytoune and Johne Pedden "to be his intenders and instructouris," and these had just been named in the list of fellows of craft present. Thus we see that in a lodge whose Warden (or Master as we should say) had signed the Schaw Statutes, both apprentices and fellows of craft chose intenders, which intenders were of their own grade. Further instances could be cited in which this also appears quite unequivocally, but it is hardly necessary to do so.

There is another entry which is puzzling, and may be significant. Andrew Patten was "entered" as we have seen, on the second day of January, 1600. But on the seventh day of June in the year before, 1599, he had already been mentioned in what must be regarded as a most important minute:

Upon ye quhilk day Andro Pattene payit xx sh to his buiking and had servit VI zeiris of his prentisehip II zeiris to serve before vir witnes Johne Fender Wilzame Aytone, etc.

As the scribe was economical of words and punctuation alike we would paraphrase the statement thus:

Upon the which day Andrew Patten paid 20 shillings for his registration and [declaration was made] that he had served 6 years of his apprenticeship, [and had] two years more to serve, before the [following] witnesses, John Fender, William Ayton, etc.

This brings definitely before us that question which has appeared vaguely in the background, suggested by the variations in the phraseology of the different records. It has already been remarked that sometimes it was doubtful from the phraseology used, whether "entry" meant anything more than mere "booking" or registration. Here apparently we have the two things definitely recorded, as done at digerent times. Patten at the lowest, must have been seventeen or eighteen years old in 1599, seeing that he had then been an apprentice for six years, and this was six months before he was made an entered apprentice. This seems decidedly to confirm our suspicions that the apprenticeship of the lodge was as distinct from legal apprenticeship, as, let us say, civil marriage and church marriage are in France and some other countries. And to accept this as an hypothesis would clear up many obscurities which appear in the various references and allusions to apprenticeship in the Mason's Craft.

What Instructions Did The Intenders Give?

But more than this follows from these minutes. A young man of eighteen who had worked at the trade for six years must have been a fairly competent Craftsman if he had had normal ability and intelligence to begin with. What then did he need intenders and instructors for? This question becomes still more pressing in the case of the "accepted" fellow of the craft. Ex hypothesi he was a competent and skilled Mason or he would not have been passed why then did he need instructors? What were they to teach him?

It is possible that those who have had no experience of skilled handicraftsmanship, and the way it is learned in apprenticeship which is more a soaking in of information than the result of set instruction may fail to see the full force of this question. But, though books and lessons can make things easier, and can shorten the time of pupillage if intelligently used, the technique of a skilled trade can only be learned by working at it, as we have had occasion to remark before. The only answer we can give to the question raised is that the intenders taught the neophyte the formal secrets of the society whatever they were. Perhaps those "simpel questions and answers" to which the brethren of Melrose reduced their ritual in 1764 may serve us here as the basis of a guess.

But yet another thing follows if this be accepted, and that is, that the things taught to the "fellow of craft," in spite of the fact that two apprentices at least were required to make the lodge complete, were something that the latter did not know; though the same reasoning leads us to the conclusion that they also had been taught something that was kept strictly from the outside world, cowans and un-entered apprentices alike. In short, that there were two "degrees," according to our definition of that term.

THE ANNUAL EXAMINATION

All this illuminates the various regulations and ordinances and enactments concerning periodical examinations. We have already cited the Aberdeen statute. If it be understood that the apprentice's intenders there referred to were themselves apprentices, then the point of their having full responsibility, and their liability to fine if they omitted anything, becomes quite clear in effect they also were being examined.

The tradition of such formal or ritual examinations was a continuous one in Scotland from the earliest times of which there is record into and through the eighteenth century [198]. It also appears as something taken for granted in the earliest days of English speculative Masonry. So much so that the "work" of the lodges in the eighteenth century was understood to be this rehearsing of examinations, and not (as it now signifies in America] the initiation of candidates. This last, indeed, was regarded as something apart, almost as an interruption to the regular labors of the lodge. However this merely falls into place with our supposition, it hardly lends it any weight. We will therefore go back to the Schaw Statutes, No. 2, the version pertaining especially to Kilwinning. The fifth clause enacts

... that the Warden of Kilwinning ... elect and chuis sex of the maist perfyte and worthiest of memorie within [the bounds of the lodge] to tak tryall of the qualificatioun of the haill masonis within the boundis foirsaid, of their art, craft scyance and antient memorie, to the effect the warden deakin may be answerable heirafter for sic personis as is committit to him, and within his boundis and jurisdictioun [199].

The conjunction of art, craft, science and ancient memory as subjects for examination is very curious and intriguing. Art and craft may refer to manual skill. Science could mean ability to make plans, lay out work and estimate costs. But what was "antient memorie"?

The thirteenth paragraph of the Statutes returns to the subject.

Item, it is ordinait ... that the luge of Kilwynning ... tak tryall of the art of memorie and science thairof, of everie fallow of craft and everie prenteiss according to ather of their vocationis, and in case that thai have lost onie point thairof eurie of thame to pay the penalty as followis for their slewthfulness...

the faulty fellows twenty shillings and apprentices eleven. In this we have "art of memories as well as "science." And these were apparently divisible into "points." Here again we have a term that survived into the eighteenth century with a technical and, as one might say, speculative sense. Attention too must be called to the phrase, "according to either of their vocations," to modernize the spelling. This certainly seems to imply a different content for the "art of memorie" in the two grades or classes.

The tenth clause states the fees that all "fallows of craft at his entries is (or are) to pay to the "common box," and the value of the gloves to be given to the members of the lodge "or euir he be admittit," and then comes the proviso:

... and that he be not admitted without ane sufficient essay and pruife of memorie and art of craft, be the warden, deacon and quarter maisteris of the ludge...

¹⁹⁸For other instances see Gould, Hist., vol. iii, p. 57 and note 5.

¹⁹⁹This and the following citations are quoted by Gould loc. cit. in his notes. For the text see Lyon, Hist., p. 12, et seq.

Here we have "proof of memory" and "art of craft." The changes have been pretty well run on these terms, and the natural interpretation is that none of them was used very strictly. The essay was undoubtedly the "master piece" which proved the candidate's manual skill and ability to design and plan. And that is the most obvious and effective way of discovering a Craftsman's capability; and we must insist again, that this kind of capability once acquired is never forgotten, any more than one forgets how to swim or ride a bicycle once either art has been acquired.

While it must be remembered that these statutes, and the ordinances of most of the Scottish lodges, primarily regulated the craft and trade by which the masons earned their livelihood, it must not be forgotten that they seem to have been very largely re-enactments or reinforcements of old usage and custom. To argue that their main purpose necessarily excluded reference to anything except the severely practical is to argue from an assumption; in effect the importation of our own mental habits and point of view into the past. At least the phraseology suggests more than a concern limited strictly to practical skill and knowledge of craft technique; and it would seem as if these references, and all those previously adduced, will be most reasonably treated by interpreting them to relate to some formal and conventional body of information, very probably in the form of catechetical questions and answers, concerning which it would be quite possible to examine everyone at an annual assembly, and in which it would be at once apparent whether a man had forgotten any "point" or not.

Thus our picture is still further developed. The main lines are now fairly clear and definite. The three classes of evidence so far examined, taken as a whole, are all explicable upon this suggested interpretation; and the mutual support thus given by each class to the others raises the probability of the hypothesis to a considerable degree. But the details are still missing, and for so much of these as can be recovered we must look to the last group of documents.

THE VESTIGES OF OPERATIVE RITUAL

We have already indicated that the small and curious group of documents known as the "Old Catechisms" are all of unknown origin and of dubious character. They are untrustworthy witnesses whose evidence, unless otherwise supported, is not to be relied upon. Unfortunately there is nothing else. Aside from them there is scarcely a hint as to what the ritual usages of the pre-Grand Lodge of Masons may have been.

It is to be regretted that, though the greater number of these documents have been published, and though they have been frequently discussed, and still more frequently quoted, they have never been systematically and critically examined and classified in the same way as the Old Charges have been, as by Hughan and Begemann, to mention two of the foremost scholars in this field. It seems best therefore to briefly give some account of them here.

We have first three printed examples, all of which were published as expose's during the first years of the Grand Lodge of 1717; in consequence, it may be presumed, of an aroused curiosity upon the subject of Freemasonry on the part of the general public. The first of these in point of date is the Mason's Examination, published in the Flying Post, or Post Master of April 13, 1723. It will be remembered that the first Book of Constitutions was in print, and apparently on sale to the general public in the early part of the same year. The sanction to publish at the end of the work being dated Jan. 17, and this was probably printed just before publications. [200]

The printed Constitutions were apparently the cause of a good deal of excitement within the Fraternity, and of curiosity and gossip outside it. The Examination appears in the Flying Post as a communication to its editor from an anonymous contributor. The preface, in the form of a letter, is quite complimentary to the Craft, and introduces the communicated document as a forgery, that was pretended by its inventors to have been found among the papers of "a Fellow Mason lately deceased." As there was an earlier publication of like character (of which no copy remains) it is possible that this was merely a reprint with a new introduction.

The following year a pamphlet entitled, The Grand Mystery of the Free Masons Discover'd appeared, which contained also, "Two Letters to a Friend", signed by "Verbs Commodus." This Catechism is likewise said to have been "found in the Custody of a FreeMason who Dyed suddenly." The two letters are "propaganda" for the rival society of the Gormogons. The first of them decrys and ridicules the Masonic Fraternity, and the second eulogizes the upstart rival organization now so dead that few but scholars have even heard its name.

Six years later appeared the Mystery of Freemasonry in the Daily Journal of Aug. 15, 1730, and in the following October came the first edition of Prichard's 'Masonry Dissected.'

The Mystery of Freemasonry (or of Freemasons) must not be confused with the Grand Mystery Discovered of 1724, as it is quite a different document. It, too, was said to have been "Taken from a Manuscript found amongst the Papers of a Deceased Brother." It may be remarked here that there is nothing inherently improbable about this having happened,

200See Vibert, BUILDER, 1923, p. 230.

not only once but a number of times. On the other hand it must also be remembered that this explanation of how such a thing came to be in hands of outsiders would be very likely to occur to a forger or fabricator, and also that the earliest example extant is characterized as an invention by the Flying Post's contributor. It follows that we cannot safely come to any definite conclusion, and must leave the question of authenticity open.

The MS. Catechisms are even more dubious as to origin than the printed ones. With the single exception of the Dumfries-Kilwinning, No. 4; they have turned up in between the leaves of old books, or in collections of papers and MSS., with nothing discoverable as to their antecedents; but again there is one exception, the Trinity College MS., which bears an endorsement in another, and later hand; "Molineux Family Papers, Freemasonry Feb., 1711." In fact so casually have these MSS. appeared that it gives some verisimilitude to the claim made by the publishers of the printed catechisms; that the originals belonged to deceased Masons.

The existing MSS. are the Dumfries-Kilwinning MS., No. 4; the Trinity College MS. above mentioned; the Sloane MS. No. 3329; the Chetwode Crawled MS.; the Essex MS. and the Institution of Freemasons, the last two of which are later than 1750; and a copy of the Mystery of Freemasons which may or may not be independent of the printed version of 1730. Finally we have the confused and fragmentary Mason's Confession, published in the Scot's Magazine in 1755, which professes to refer to a quarter of a century earlier [201]; namely,. "about the year 1727."

Three of these Catechisms are versions of a common original, the Grand Mystery, the Essex and the Institution. The first was printed, as we have seen, in 1724. The two latter can be shown, by minor variations, to be independent versions, so that in spite of their late date as copies, they support the earlier printed document. This makes it practically certain that the original version, from which all three are independently derived, must be older than 1724 by a number of years. The same thing is true of the Examination and the Mystery of Freemasons, which are also independent versions of a common original. The remaining documents all stand alone, having no specially close relationships. So far as the probable date of the MSS. can be determined from the paper and handwriting, they might all be earlier than 1717, with the exception of the Essex and the Institution. But most of them have been set later than this on account of their contents. However, as the age of these contents is a question at issue, this cannot be accepted as a conclusive argument against an earlier dating. Into this controversy there is no need for us to enter now; it is sufficient to say that all these independent MSS, are of about the same period as the printed Catechisms. Probably the contents of all are, in the main, older than 1717, but all are open to the suspicion of being modified, added to or re-arranged at some time after this date.

These rather tedious prefatory remarks have been necessitated by the fact that the documents are practically unknown to the average Masonic reader, in spite of the fact that much of the Grand Mystery is to be found in Mackey's History, and that Gould published it, and the Examination in full [202]. A general idea of the nature of the Catechisms may

²⁰¹The Dumfries-Kilwinning was published by John Lane A. Q. C., vol. vi, p. 41; the Sloane MS. has been published a number of times; see BUILDER, 1928, p. 248, note 4; also for the Institution. The Trinity College, the Chetwode Crawley and the Essex MS., have never been published. Compare also the discussion of these documents by Bro. Herbert Poole, A. Q. C., vol. xxxvii, p. 5, et seq. 202In the Appendix to his large History. In the American Edition it will be found in the middle of the last

thus be gained from these well-known works. We shall strictly limit ourselves here to such passages as may throw light on the existence of separate degrees, and these are fortunately not very numerous. And in respect to this, we shall merely inquire what it is they tell us, regardless of their general lack of authority and the uncertainty as to their date. And in doing this we shall treat them as a whole, so far as that may prove to be possible.

volume at p. 276.

THE POINTS OF FELLOWSHIP

First we will take that group which may be designated by the name of its published exemplar the Grand Mystery. In each of these three catechisms we have this question and answer:

Q. How many proper points?

A. Foot to foot, knee to knee, hand to hand, heart to heart and ear to ear.

By itself this signifies little to our purpose, but as has been said, these cryptic statements must be treated as a whole, and we have to interpret one by parallel passages elsewhere, when such exist. The same answer appears in the Examination and the Mystery, with the slight variation, "mouth to ear" instead of "ear to ear," but the question makes it much more significant in view of our present object. It is, "How many points be there in Fellowship?" In view of all that has gone before this can hardly be assigned to apprentices.

In the Chetwode Crawley MS. we find this passage:

Q. Are you a Fellow Craft?

A. Yes

Q. How many points of fellowship are there?

The answer being the same as the enumeration in the Grand Mystery of the "proper points."

Returning to the latter, and the two related versions, the Essex and the Institution, we find almost at the beginning these questions and their answers:

Q. What is a Mason?

A. A Man, begot of a man, born of a woman, and Brother to a King.

O. What is a Fellow?

A. A Companion of a Prince.

This has no close parallel elsewhere in our sources, but there is a passage in the Dumfries-Kilwinning MS. No. 4 which seems to be an echo. It will be best to give it in full.

Q. What are you?

A. I ame a Man.

Q. How shall I know that?

A. By all true signs ...

Q. What, are you no more to us?

A. Yes, but a man, I was begotten of a man and born of a woman, and besides have several potentat kings and mighty princes to my brothers.

The spelling in this MS. is fearful and wonderful, and punctuation is practically absent we have inserted several commas to bring out the apparent meaning.

As the first answer stands it makes very little sense, and is probably corrupt, as perhaps the whole passage. If we could suppose that the original answer was "I am a Mason," the rest would be significant.

PART 16

THE emendation in the answer to the first question in the Catechism in the Dumfries-Kilwinning MS. that was suggested last month may be regarded as the more probable, in that it only gives significance to what is, as it stands, a rather nonsensical response, but it also brings it into closer accord with the parallel documents. Every other catechism extant excepting this and the Trinity College MS. has a question directly demanding: "Are you a Mason?" The other exception, the Trinity College MS. has the following:

Q. What manner of man are you?

A. I am a Mason.

Thus we may suppose with some plausibility that the original of the Dumfries-Kilwinning MS. had some such question as this last, and that would make it probable that the third question, as quoted above, was an inquiry as to a higher grade, and that the answer embodied the same contrast as appears explicitly in the Grand Mystery and its congeners.

In the Examination, and its companion, the Mystery of Freemasons, we find further questions concerning the grade of the one questioned.

- Q. Have you been in the Kitchen?
- A. Yes I have.
- Q. Did you ever dine in the Hall?
- A. Yes I did.

To these answers the Mystery appends respectively the two notes. To the first:

N. B. You shall know an Enter'd Apprentice by this question.

and to the second:

N. B. A Brother Mason by this Question.

The Examination throws its own light upon the subject. It begins somewhat differently from the Mystery. The first two questions and answers are as follows:

- Q. Are you a Free Mason?
- A. Yes indeed I am.
- Q. How shall I know it?
- A. By signs and tokens ... from my entrance into the kitchen and thence into the Hall.

Thus here turns up once more, it would seem, the terminology we have tentatively distinguished in the Old Charges and the Scottish Minutes that is, that "Mason," or (in the Examination) "Free Mason," was equivalent to Master and Fellow.

The Mystery goes on to ask another question to differentiate the Fellow which has no counterpart in any other of our documents, though it appears in Prichard, and in the Catechisme des Francs- Macons [203]. And in both it is definitely noted in explanation that

²⁰³Published in 1744 by Travenol. Reprinted the following year in the expose' entitled Le Sceau Romps, and shortly after in L'Ordre des Franc-Macons Trahi and in the many successive editions of those two works

it has the same purpose as it has in the Mystery. Of course in these last two publications it is quite possible that the idea was borrowed from a version of the Mystery As it appears in the latter it runs:

Q. How old are you?

A. Under 5 or under 7, which you will.

N. B. When you are first made a Mason you are only enter'd Apprentice, and till you are made a Master, or as they call it, pass'd the Master's Part, you are only enter'd Apprentice, and consequently must answer under 7, for if you say above, they will expect the Master's Word and Signs.

Now this note is quite likely to have been the work of the editor who prepared the MS. for the printer, so that if any weight is to be given to it at all, it is as reflecting the usage in or about 1730 in London. But the implication is plain that "Master" was the grade above Apprentice, and that the "Master's Part" was a second degree, in our sense of that word.

The remaining documents will have to be treated separately as the indications they afford on the subject of grades, and the secrets pertaining thereto, are almost all peculiar to one source only. We may take the Mason's Confession first. Its date of publication is late, but the anonymous author, who seems to have quite honestly come to the conclusion that Masonry was superstitious and sinful, and that it was his duty to expose it, says that his account is

... to testify concerning that oath, word and other secrets held among the corporation of Mason's wherein I was taken under the same by sundry of them gathered together and met at D about the year 1727.

We may observe here, incidentally, that the Confession and the Sloane MS. No. 3329, are alone in being written from a hostile or critical standpoint. Omitting the editorial notes in the Mystery and Grand Mystery, which are not properly part of these documents, all the others give the impression of being memoranda of things important to remember but likely to be forgotten. The "Confessor" was admittedly a Mason, but his account is so confused and disjointed that it seems probable that he had had no Masonic intercourse for many years before he wrote it. That he was not a Mason by trade may be also surmised. On the whole it seems safe to assume that, so far as it goes, the Confession represents Scottish usage of about 1725-1750. But whether earlier or later, the lodge in which the author was entered would seem certainly to have known two degrees, but two only. He says explicitly that "a word in the Scripture was shewed" him, which he was told was "the Mason word." And then he adds that one word is the "Mason word," and another "a fellow-craft word," and goes on to say;

The former is shewn to an entered prentice after he has sworn the oath, and the latter is shewn to one that has been a prentice at least for a year, when he is admitted a degree higher in their lodge, after he has sworn the oath again, or declared his approbation of it.

Now the use of the term "degree" here is cause for suspicion. By the time this was published the modern system of three degrees was being worked in Scotland. The minutes of the Lodge at Kelso tell us that the new Master Mason degree was introduced there in June, 1754, and it is remarked that it was worked elsewhere; certainly in Edinburgh

whence it was brought. It is very likely therefore that the "Confessor" used the terminology of the period of his writing rather than that of the time of his initiation [204]. But this does not affect the fact that when he was made a Mason the Fellow Craft received secrets which were kept from the Apprentice. That there was more to these secrets than the "fellowcraft word" merely, appears at the end of the Confession, where a series of signs and signals for recognition are described. One of these (so loosely described that one cannot say the secret was really revealed) he calls the "fellow-crafts due guard"; and with this, it is intimated, there went a grip, which is as difficult to reconstruct from the description as the "due guard." And then is added, as an alternative, the five points we have already discussed, though he gives them no distinctive name. The passage runs:

... or placing himself hand to hand foot to foot, knee to knee, heart to heart, ear to ear, [he] says 'Great you, great you God greateth you, and make you a good Master-mason. I'm a young man going to push my fortune, if you can furnish me you will do well."

Now in his account of what he remembered of his initiation the "Confessor" gives an Apprentice salutation, which will be mentioned later in conjunction with the Chetwode Crawled MS. On the other hand all the other sources give a Fellow's greeting or salutation of a similar character to the above. The only exception is the Trinity College MS., which is so very brief, and omits so much, that there is no significance in its not mentioning this.

It is one of the indications of an amalgamation of the secrets of the two ceremonies some time during the period preceding 1717 that this formal salutation is not differentiated in most cases as pertaining to the "Fellows," though in form it is from Masters and Fellows to Masters and Fellows, which in itself would seem to make it inappropriate for an apprentice. The phraseology varied a good deal. It might be guessed that the original form was distinguished by a triple repetition, which however in some places had become obscured. Perhaps the Sloane MS. may be taken as giving a typical form;

The right worshipful, the Mast'rs and fellows in that worshipful lodge from whence we last came greet you, greet you, greet you.

To which the reply was,

God's good greeting to you dear brother.

Prichard has;

... the right worshipful brothers and fellows of the right worshipful holy Lodge of St. John ... greet you thrice heartily well.

The original of the reply to this possibly included the jingle, "God's good greeting be at this our meeting," which appears with variations in the five documents included in the Grand Mystery and Examination groups, and also in the Sloane MS.

²⁰⁴According to the editor's note to the Confession, the original MS. bore the date Nov. 13, 1751, and was supplemented by another document dated Feb. 20, 1752, both by the same hand presumed to be that of the "Confessor." The whole had been communicated to the Scot's Magazine "by a Mr. D B." Thus we have no indication of the part of Scotland from which the "Confessor" came. But it is fairly safe to assume that he could have heard about the new system. On the other hand it cannot be said positively that the term "degree" was not in use before the Grand Lodge era. It was a word in quite common use to designate social rank and status.

The Confession is certainly Scottish in origin; the Examination type, judging by certain slight indications, possibly originated in or about London. From other equally slight indications it might be surmised that the Grand Mystery versions came from somewhere geographically in between possibly the north of England. Yet in all we find definite traces of certain forms and secrets peculiar to, and distinguishing, the Fellow of the Craft or Master. There is the formal greeting or salutation, associated with a sign and a word, and "proper" points of Fellowship; and besides this, test questions and answers to introduce and pave the way to these more definite and serious proofs of the free Craftsman's status.

EARLY MEANS OF RECOGNITION

It may be remarked in passing, that to no one will the various means of recognition described and hinted at in these documents seem stranger than to a Freemason of today. It is a curious commentary on Mackey's Code of Landmarks [205], unalterable as the laws of the Medes and Persians, that in the very first of them, and the one "of all the most legitimate and unquestioned," which can "admit of no variation," we find the "Means of Recognition," which in two hundred years have themselves changed beyond recognition. Though it is probable that on the whole this change has been due to a progressive and organic evolution.

We will now take up the very curious Chetwode Crawled MS. which links up with the Confession on one point, and with the Haughfoot Minute of 1702 in regard to another. It is the only one of our sources that definitely describes a second ceremony, though as we have seen, the Confession alludes to one as following the "entry" at an interval of the year or more. The passage is not a long one, and may be quoted in full [206] After telling how the Apprentice receives "the word" the author or transcriber says:

Now it is to be remarked that all the Signs and words as just spoken of are only what belongs to the entered prentices. But to a Master-Mason or ffellow Craft there is more to be done, as after follows.

ffirst, all the Apprentices are to be removed out of the Company, and not Suffered to Stay, but only Mason-Masters. Then he who is to be admitted a member of the ffellowship is put again to his knees and gets the Oath administered to him anew. Afterwards he must go out of the Company with the youngest Master to learn the words and signs of ffellowship. Then coming in again, he makes the Master- Sign, and says the Same words of Entry as the Prentice did, only leaving out the Common Lodge. Then the Masons whisper among themselves beginning at the youngest, as formerly. Afterwards the young Master must advance and put himself in the posture wherein he is to receive the word. And says to the assembled Honorable Company whispers;

"The worthy masons and Honorable Company that I came from, Greet you well, Greet you well."

The insertion of the word "whispers" at the end of the next to last sentence seems curious. Both the Grand Mastery and the Institution have an Addendum in which casual modes of recognition are described, of which the fifth is

You must Whisper, saying thus; The Masters and Fellows of the Worshipful Company from whence I came greet you [all]

However the point is not of importance in the present connection. We will now pass to that curious fragment on the present first page of the minute book of the old Lodge of Haughfoot. It will be remembered that some preceding pages have been torn out at some time. The few words remaining were a great puzzle until the Chetwode Crawled MS. was discovered. They were recognized as being of the nature of a ritual rubric, but their precise bearing was a matter of conjecture only. There are only two sentences the first incomplete.

²⁰⁵Mackey, Encyclopedia. side Landmarks.

²⁰⁶The passage is discussed by Bro. Herbert Poole in the paper previously mentioned, A. Q. C., xxxvi, p. 4.

... of entrie as the Apprentice did leaving out (the Common Judge). They then whisper the word as before, and the Master Mason grips his hand in the ordinary way.

Now the Chetwode Crawley MS. in the description of, or more properly perhaps, the memorandum on, the "entry" of an apprentice, says he is sent out of the lodge accompanied by the "Youngest Mason" to be taught the "manner of making Guard," consisting of the sign, word and postures of his Entry, and including the following salutation:

Now am I the youngest and last entered Apprentice; As I am sworn by God and St. John, by the Square and Compass and Common Lodge to attend my Master's service at the Honorable Lodge, from Munday in the morning to Saturday at night, and to keep the keys thereof ...

The remainder is not essential for our purpose here. Turning to the Confession we find that the author says concerning the signs and words that at his initiation;

One person in the lodge instructed me a little about them the same day that I entered, and was called my "Author" while he chose another to be his "intended until the following assembly "that time twelve-month." It is not definitely said that the newly entered apprentice was sent out of the lodge, but there is a description of his taking formal steps over three lines drawn on the ground, which seems to indicate a ceremonial re-entry and salutation. The passage is as follows, and must be considered in the light of the excerpt from the Chetwode Crawled MS. given above;

Question: What say you? Answer: Here stand I (with his feet in form of a square) younger and last entered Prentice, ready to serve my Master from Monday morning to the Saturday night in all lawful employment.

All this leads almost irresistibly to the conclusion that at the beginning of the eighteenth century and of course by inference earlier still there were two quite distinct formal salutations employed in Scottish operative lodges, one by the apprentices, and the other by the Masters and Fellows; and that each was accompanied by certain postures and gestures, which were in effect signs of recognition; and that those pertaining to the higher grade were not known to the apprentices.

The Fellow's salutation it would appear was known and used in England in variant forms, and it may be a fair inference to assume that this implies an Apprentice's salutation also, although in that breaking down of the distinction between the two grades in purely nonoperative lodges which we believe to have occurred in some places, this may have come to be little emphasized, or even to have entirely dropped out.

Before leaving the Chetwode Crawley MS. we may note that in the Catechism which follows the descriptive note on the reception of a "Master Mason or ffellow Craft," the following query and response appears:

Q. 8th. What's the name of your Lodge?

Ansr. The Lodge of Kilwinning.

If this is to be accepted as a safe indication of ultimate origin, and there seems no special reason why it should not be, then it is an additional confirmation of our conclusion that Gould was mistaken in inferring that the bare communication of a word was the sum total

of the secrets known to the Masons there; for this reference would tie it up closely with the ritual practiced at Haughfoot in 1702, which he regarded as abnormal [207].

There remain two MSS. more to be considered, the Sloane MS. No. 3329 and the Trinity College MS. These present a special problem, in that on their face they seem to speak of three degrees, under much the same names as are employed today. We have already noted that the paper and handwriting of the former has been judged, by experts having no interest in the contents, to be possibly as early as the first years of the 18th century or even the last years of the 17th. While, judged by these same external criteria, 1730 is probably as late a date as it would be justifiable to assign to it.

In dealing with Mackey's theory of the origin of the symbolic degrees we examined the arguments he based on certain features of this document [208], and it is these that now call for further examination.

We have already remarked the somewhat critical and disparaging tone of this MS. This could be accounted for by assuming that it is a compilation from various sources by the hand of a non-Mason. The author or compiler always speaks of members of the fraternity as "they." "They discover [each] other by signs," "their gripe for fellowcrafts"; while "they say," or "say they," is a frequently recurring phrase. It is this latter especially which almost gives the MS. an air of having been written by one who had become a Mason out of curiosity but had never identified himself with the Craft, and had written down something of what he had learned in the same spirit of detachment that an anthropologist might write of the ceremonies of some primitive secret society to which he had gained admission in his study of the culture of a savage race. Whichever way it was, there is not much order or system in his account. He first describes at greater length than in any other of the documents a number of the "casual" signs or signals used to attract a Mason's attention in various circumstances. Among these we find the description of "gripes" that is quoted by Mackey. Then comes a Catechism thus introduced:

Here followeth their private discourse by way of question and answer.

This has sixteen questions. Then we are told that:

In some places they discourse as followeth.

This refers to a group of eight questions, evidently a fragment of another catechism in part parallel to the first, and which, as it stands, ends with a form of the Fellow's Salutation and the response thereto. Then follows this addendum, which it may be assumed comes from a different source:

²⁰⁷It is really amazing that Hughan was unable to see the significance of the conjunction of the Chetwode Crawled MS. and the Haughfoot minute, which he seems to have been the first to notice; he being apparently the discoverer of the MS., or at least the first to critically examine it. From the brief account he gave of it in A. Q. C., vol. xvii, p. 91, it seems it was found in the pages of an old book, the antecedents of which were not discoverable. It is hard to see how, in view of the definite date and unquestioned authenticity of the Haughfoot minute, that it was possible to remain blind to the almost compulsory conclusion, that whatever the actual date of the MS. it represented, in a variant version, the same original that underlay the usage of the lodge of Haughfoot.

²⁰⁸BUILDER, August, 1928, p. 240. For Mackey's citations see his History, vol. iv, p. 969. Revised edition, vol. iv, p. 1023.

Another salutation is giving the mast'rs or fellows grip, saying, the right worshipful the mast'rs and fellows in that worshipful lodge from whence we last came, greet you, greet you, greet you well.

To which there is also a proper formal reply. In this reference to the "Master's or Fellow's grip" it is natural to take the two terms as synonymous, as we have found them to be in so many other places. But the previous description of the "gripes" throws some doubt upon this, and the difficulty thus raised makes Mackey's interpretation not unreasonable at the time he wrote. As he quoted this previous passage in full in a work that is accessible everywhere, there will be no need to give more here than the phrases we are specially interested in; there are two paragraphs, neither beginning with a capital letter:

their gripe for fellow craftes is clasping their right hands, etc., etc.

their master's gripe is clasping, etc., etc., but some say the mast'rs grip is the same I last described, only, etc.

Taken as it stands this differentiates the masters and the fellows, and ignores the apprentices. If we might suppose that a mistake had been made in copying, and that we should read:

their gripe is, etc.

their masters or fellow craftes gripe, etc.

the difficulty would vanish; but the emendation is rather risky. It is very true that a word can easily get misplaced or doubled in copying, as everyone who has done much of it knows only too well, but it is safer not to avoid a difficulty by altering the text, unless it is obvious on general grounds that an error exists.

If we had further information as to these "gripes" from other sources we might be able to come to a more definite decision. But there is nothing quite parallel to them in any of our documents. The Grand Mystery has a list of "Signs to know a true Mason", the fourth of which is:

To take hand in hand, with Left and Right Thumbs close and touch each Wrist three Times with the Forefinger each Pulse.

And the Institution repeats this with some changes that make it more incomprehensible still. The Examination has, in a somewhat similar list of signals, the following statement:

To Gripe is when you take a Brother by the Right Hand and put your middle Finger to his Wrist.

Wrist and pulse are much the same thing for such a purpose, and this last, which is reasonably clear, may be the original of the former. But neither is like the two "gripes" described in the Sloane MS.

Gould was quite strongly of the opinion that the Sloane MS. is later than the publication of Prichard's work, and that the compiler knew and borrowed ideas from it. Prichard describes three grips, one for each degree, and the first one, assigned to the Entered Apprentice, sounds as if it might have been a variation of the one first described in the Sloane MS. This might be taken as some confirmation for such an emendation of the text of the latter as we suggested above, especially as the "master's gripe" as therein described bears a general

resemblance to the grip set forth in a note to Prichard's "Master's Degree." This would leave Prichard's Fellow Craft grip with no traditional parallel which is of course what we would expect.

If then this emendation were accepted, the Sloane MS. falls into line with all the other sources so far examined, as exhibiting two grades; some secrets being common to all Masons, and some reserved for the Masters or Fellows. But on its face it indicates three grades, although apprentices are only mentioned once, in the fifth question of "their private discourse":

Q. What is a just and perfect or just and lawful lodge?

A. A just and perfect lodge is two Interprintices two fellowcraftes and two Masters ... [or] if need require five will serve that is two Interprintices, two fellow crafts and one Mast'r on the highest hill or lowest valley of the world without the crow of a cock or the bark of a dogg.

It must be said quite frankly that this particular variant of the description of the lodge found in each of our documents (with one exception) seems to imply the of idea of three degrees; even more so, indeed, than Prichard's version does in the parallel passage. This last tells us the lodge consists of

One Master, two Wardens, two Fellow Crafts and two Entered Apprentices.

The Mystery has:

A Master and two wardens, and four Fellows.

The Examination adds to this, "five Apprentices." There is the possibility, which we offer for what it may be worth, that the two Masters mentioned by the Sloane MS. originally referred to two officers for it would appear that there were not always two wardens in addition to a Master (or Deacon).

It may also be noted that the Grand Mystery gives:

... Five or Seven right and perfect Masons on the highest Mountains, or the lowest Valleys in the world

which the Essex MS. and the Institution repeat; the latter changing the order, making it "seven or five."

Remembering the insistence of the Schaw Statutes on the presence of two Apprentices, this might be interpreted as referring to the constitution of the lodge before and after the apprentices were "removed out of the Company," as the Chetwode Crawley MS. puts it, when a Master or fellow was to be accepted. But the fact is that there is no consistency between the accounts, excepting only that the numbers given are generally odd. Indeed the Grand Mystery and its congeners draw attention to this by asking "Why do Odds make a lodge?" the Institution says "odd numbers" to which the answer is, "Because all odds are men's advantage"; all which he may interpret who can.

The Essex MS. has an additional series of questions, in the answer to one of which we are told that any number "from three to thirteen" makes a "perfect lodge."

To thoroughly discuss this and some other subsidiary points would take too much time and would not be worth while, but it may be noted that the subject is far from having been exhausted. We will therefore pass to the last of our sources, the Trinity College MS., which even more definitely than the Sloane seems to postulate three degrees: Master, "fellow craftsman" and "Enter prentice."

We noted to begin with that this MS. bears an endorsement "Freemasonry Feb. 1711." This is in a later hand than the body of the document, and we know neither just what it means nor why it was made. The first judgment that naturally occurs is that it is a note of the age of the document; and as we do not know who made it, or what his source of information, we are left in a state of uncertainty as to its value. But there is another possibility; it might be a note of the date at which the paper was examined and filed. It is guite plausible that some methodical person who was sorting and classifying miscellaneous family papers, not only labelled them, but made a note of the date when doing so. If this supposition were accepted it would follow that the document itself is older than the date. We believe that disinterested experts, with no knowledge of Masonic antiquities, are inclined to judge the paper and handwriting to be of the beginning of the century, though obviously such considerations alone can hardly lead to certainty inside of fairly wide limits, thirty to thirty-five years or so [209]. We have therefore to allow for this indefiniteness and endeavor so to interpret the document as to make our conclusions, if possible, consistent with either the earlier or later limits which means that they will be to the same extent tentative and indefinite, too.

The MS. contains a brief series of eleven questions and answers, for all of which, with one enigmatic exception, close parallels are to be found in most of the other documents. Then come a few memoranda regarding signs. Here we are first told of a somewhat complicated sequence of gestures called the "common sign," and then comes a short paragraph in which mention is made of a "Master sign," a "fellow craftsman's sign" and the "Enter prentice sign." They are not described, but are merely designated by words that doubtless would have had mnemonic significance to anyone who had once known what they were, but which have for a modern reader no meaning at all. The "Master sign" is said to be "backbone," that of the "fellow craftsman" is "knuckles and sinews," while to the "Enter prentice" is assigned "sinews" only. The following paragraph gives a little more detail, and each sign is coupled with a word. Thus "backbone" is stated to go with the word "Matchpin," a corrupt rendering, doubtless, of the word "Maughbin" found elsewhere.

The only thing in all this that is of concern in our present inquiry is the ascription of special secrets to three classes of Masons, bearing essentially the same titles as our three symbolic degrees. This is quite clear and unequivocal. The apparent reference to three degrees in the Sloane MS. can be removed by an emendation of the text requiring only the deletion of a single word. Here the conclusion is unescapable that three degrees were definitely recognized by the author of the document.

If we assume that it was written by, or at least owned by, some member of the Irish branch of the Molyneux family, in or about the year 1711, then we have to conclude that in Ireland the evolution of the Masonic system was earlier than in Great Britain, so far as the extant

²⁰⁹Bro. E. L. Hawkins (A.Q.C., vol. xxvi, p. 18) says that an expert judged the writing to be thirty or forty years earlier than 1711. Gould took it to be later than 1723, solely on the ground of the "Scotticisms" it contained. But what if it came from Scotland?

evidence leads us to suppose. The endorsement has not been questioned, we believe, except in regard to the date. And the date has been questioned simply because it was assumed that the other evidence requires us to conclude that no third degree could have existed, anywhere, before 1723.

It is very difficult here to hold the balance true. The endorsement may be authentic enough, and yet in this one respect erroneous. That is obvious. But this is not to be proved by a negative argument. We must recall Bro. Tuckett's fallacy of the ultra- critical, the assumption "that what cannot be proved cannot have happened." The positive evidence tells us that in 1730 certainly, and probably, in 1727 or a little earlier, the three degrees were in existence in some places. It also tells us that in 1723 the Grand Lodge of London, and most of the old Scottish lodges, used a two degree system. But this does not exclude the possibility that elsewhere a third degree had come into existence. It may be considered unlikely, it may be judged more probable that the endorsed date of the Trintty College MS. is a mistake, yet the possibility remains that it may be substantially correct; and this must be kept in mind.

On the whole, we are, ourselves, inclined to the view that the MS. is later than 1711, but we do not think that the point is so important to this investigation as it may at first seem to be. Before discussing this, however, it may be remarked that, presuming the endorsement was made in good faith, and this no one has ever doubted, the fact that the month is given as well as the year certainly indicates that it was not a mere conjecture on the part of whoever made the note. one may guess at the probable date of a thing, and set down a year, but no one would be likely to specify any particular month in a year without some warrant for it. But even so, there are still plenty of ways in which error could have arisen. The date might have been copied from some partially illegible memorandum, or the information may have been received at some time previously and remembered inaccurately. All that can be said is that it was probably based on some information received, whether good or bad, or accurately or inaccurately reproduced.

PART 17

BEFORE proceeding to a final summing up of the results of this discussion it may be well to consider a general objection to the conclusions which seem to have emerged. And it is not an objection that can be merely brushed aside, for the point raised therein fairly demands consideration.

All these catechisms that have been put in evidence are evidently, what in several cases is explicitly stated, examinations, means by which, as it is alleged, one freemason of the period could demonstrate his status to another, and be at the same time assured of that of his interlocutor. On the "Single Degree" theory of Hughan, Lyon and Mackey and their followers, no difficulty is here presented, but, if two or more degrees be assumed as being an integral part of the original deposit of Masonic tradition, the question arises: How did it come about that questions relating to a superior grade were mixed in without discrimination with the general demand, the answers to which would be common knowledge to all grades of Masons?

The general lines on which this difficulty may be solved have been indicated, but the matter is too important to be left with a merely incidental treatment, although a complete analysis would take too much time to be practicable, and could hardly be made intelligible except to those who had copies of all the documents before them.

We will, to begin with, refer once more to the Catechisme des Francs Masons. As we have it reprinted in the work L'Ordre des Franc-Masons Trahi, it is interspersed with notes, which may have been in the original publication, but some of which certainly seem to be due to the compiler of the later work. Disregarding these breaks in the continuity of the Sequence of questions and answers, we are struck at once by two obvious things. The first is that three degrees, Apprentif, Compagnon and Maitre, are refered to, each having secrets peculiar to it while the second peculiarity is that the special secrets of the two higher grades are mingled quite indiscriminately with those that are common to all Masons, including Apprentifs. This catechism as a whole, and those published by Prichard, are more complete, and cover more ground, than any of the documents we have been considering, or else they have been more subject to the process of development. It is probable that both the alternatives are true. There are indications in some of the older forms to lead us to suspect the incorporation of parallel variations. This, with elaboration and explanation, would seem to account for much of the contents of the two more developed forms - though this development in each case was independent. In Prichard we find three definitely separated parts, but in the Catechism we find a most curious inconsequence. Questions of a general character seem to form the main texture or background, while interspersed here and there are questions proper to one or other of the higher grades, and there are several that have different answers according as the one answering is Apprentice, Companion or Mastery [210]. From which the necessary

²¹⁰After some general questions comes a word assigned to the Apprentices, followed by one belonging to the next higher grade, which is given in response to the question: "Are you a Companion?" Then follow questions about the lodge of the kind that seem everywhere to have been common to the Apprentices, and then some description of the forms of initiation. Then a second time comes the question: "Are you a Companion?" followed by one about the letter "G." which we are informed a Master answered differently from a Companion. Then comes the Apprentice's greeting, including the statement that he is ready to

conclusion is that, however illogical and inconsistent it may seem, the lack of any sharp segregation of matter pertaining to a higher grade does not prove that there was no such specific allotment.

work from Monday till Saturday, and then a question about wages for which each grade has its own answer. Then is followed the demand: "Are you a Master?" and several others which have different answers according to grade. Indeed the latter part of the Catechism seems to be little more than a disconnected series of catch questions set down as they came to mind.

EARLY CONFUSION OF GRADES ACCOUNTED FOR

The hypothesis of a "telescoping" of grades, or that of a regular custom of conferring both at once, would each quite account for such confusion. In the one case the distinction would have more or less broken down, and in the other, there would be no practical need to keep things separate and distinct. Of course, as "telescoping" would be merely a further stage of decadence, following on after the habit of accepting candidates as fellows immediately after their entry, all the confusions in the Catechisms could spring ultimately from the same root cause.

Now the distinction between Apprentice and Fellow seems to have been almost entirely lost in the Grand Mystery and its two parallel versions, although these seem to be otherwise much fuller and more complete and more orderly in arrangement than any of the others. It would be feasible to suggest that some such arrangement was followed in the old Lodge of York at the beginning of the eighteenth century, if we may judge from its extant minutes.

In the Examination the distinction is clear, though, from the obscure description of the ceremonies with which the catechism is prefaced, it would seem to derive from a locality where there was no interval between grades, and this supposition is strengthened by the fact that the answer to the first question combines the Apprentice's and Fellow's response in one, although at the end the two grades are definitely differentiated. Its companion document, the Mystery of Freemasons, has also a mixture of grades at the beginning, and likewise at the end differentiates them, even more clearly than the Examination. The editorial note:

There is not one Mason in a Hundred that will be at the Expense to pass the Master's Part, except it be for Interest, might point to the existence of an attempt at reform by reintroducing a real interval, as was done at Dunblane and Haughfoot, and, as we may guess, possibly in London, too - if we suppose these versions to have come from that locality.

The Dumfries-Kilwinning MS. tells us least of all, though it may be interpreted as suggesting some such intermixture as we find in the last two documents, but on the whole it seems to be rather incomplete. The Confession, confused as it is, definitely describes two degrees, though the author seems to remember little of the higher one. We could suppose that he had been well coached by his Intender during the year's interval of which he speaks, because the latter, being liable to a fine if his pupil were found not to he fully instructed, saw to it that he learned his lesson.

In the Chetwode Crawley MS., in spite of its exasperating brevity, there is no confusion at all. The questions belonging to the Fellow-Craftsman, who is the same as the Master Mason, or Mason Master, are quite distinct in the short catechism that is given, and follow in order those of more general character which were taught to the Apprentice. The Sloane MS. we are inclined to believe is a compilation by a non-Mason, and also that the material used by its author related to a two-degree system, and that, either by a pure mistake in copying, or else by being interpreted in the light of some knowledge of a more developed arrangement, it has been given the superficial appearance of referring to three grades under the names we are now so familiar with. Either explanation is possible. This brings us to the

deferred question regarding the date of the Trinity College MS., and the inferences consequent thereon.

A Possible Evolution Before 1717

We have said that in our own opinion it is most probable this manuscript is later than the date endorsed upon it. But it remains that it is not certain that this is so; and even supposing that it is, the question arises, how much later? That is, was it later than 1723 or 1730? For while it undoubtedly refers to three degrees, under what are practically the same names that we use today [211], there is very little else that is recognizable. Its affinities seem to be much closer with the other Catechisms than to any later ritual forms. Can we then suppose it to represent a first sketch of a tri-gradal system? Or an independent line of development?

Another question; assuming the date to be erroneous, are we to give credit to the remainder of the endorsement - and accept it as having belonged to some member of the Molyneux family, with the inference therefrom that it is of Irish origin?

To use a theatrical simile, the "spot-light" has hitherto been on the Grand Lodge of London. In the Book of Constitutions, the official records, newspaper allusions and so on, students have had definite and connected material to work upon. It was therefore natural enough to assume that all modern Masonry was transmitted through the "four old lodges" of the English metropolis. Though the earlier extreme view, that pre-Grand Lodge Masonry had dwindled almost to a vanishing point or rather four vanishing points and then revived, and from thence spread out all over the world, is now fully recognized as untenable, yet, owing to the obscurity and uncertainty found elsewhere, attention is still pre-eminently drawn to the only place where the series of events is comparatively clear. But this needs conscious correction; we have got to keep in mind the fact that Masonry did exist elsewhere. In Scotland, Ireland and York certainly; elsewhere in England almost certainly, and in France (and also the Low Countries) very probably. The erudite French historian, Albert Lantoine, cites the Jesuit father, Louis Maimbourg, author of a history of the Crusades, as referring to the Freemasons "as a society that is believed to have been founded at the conquest of the Holy Land." And Maimbourg died in 1686 [212]. This is only one of several references which point in the same direction. We quote this one because it is not very generally known. These indications may all be very doubtful and uncertain, but to quote Lantoine again, where there is smoke there is probably fire. Once we can free our minds of the natural bias that makes it difficult to realize that Masonry once existed and propagated itself very well without the elaborate machinery of Grand Lodges and Warrants and Charters, we can see that, so far from the existence of the fire being impossible, it is really highly probable; and though the evidence in itself may not be rated any higher on this account, yet its implications will seem much more in accord with the probabilities of the case. But it is no part of our present affair to argue for or against the existence of Freemasonry prior to 1717 in any particular place or country, we merely wish to draw attention that it did certainly exist elsewhere than in London, and that there is nothing in the world to force us to believe that all ritual evolution took its rise in the "regular" lodges under the new Constitution. Indeed, it is inherently probable, when we think of it, that innovations would be more likely to rise outside the new organization. Here again we may be very easily misled by the complex of inferences based on the older views that still hold

²¹¹The terms used actually are "Master," "Fellow Craftsman" and "Enter Prentice."

²¹²Lantoine, Histoire de la Francmaconnerie Française, pp. 104, 132.

their ground, though those views have themselves been rejected. The idea may still hold its place in the back of our minds that, like Athena, the Grand Lodge sprang forth fully armed, and clothed in the aegies of authority, on St. John's Day in the year 1717, all out of the empty blue, without generation or antecedents.

As a matter of fact it is very doubtful if the year 1717 can be assigned with anything like accuracy as the date of the founding of the Grand Lodge. There was a meeting of the same four lodges in 1716 which seems equally entitled to the honour. Such a movement must have had some antecedents, some incubation at least, even though we can do little but speculate about it. The New Articles in some of the later versions of the Old Charges point to some earlier attempt to reorganize and reform the Craft. While on the other hand it could quite well be asserted that the Grand Lodge proper did not really take form until 1723, when the first records begin and the first Grand Secretary was appointed; and that previous to this there had been, not a Grand Lodge, but a General Assembly of the London Masons; either as a genuine tradition, or as a conscious attempt to reconstruct it on the basis of the Old Charges, as they were then understood. However, the point is not one that is of much consequence for our present purpose, attention has been drawn to it for one reason only, and that is to emphasize the fact that we are dealing with a living social organism at a period of accelerated evolution. And we specially wish to emphasize evolution.

THE CAUSES OF THE EVOLUTION

It is now time to gather up the various threads of the whole course of the discussion and see what answer can be given to the final question; how and why did our present tri-gradal system come into being? The conclusion we have reached is that prior to the transition period, which is represented not delimited - by the symmetrical figure 1717, the Mason's fraternity, on its esoteric side, had two distinct grades which, as we have defined the term, were "degrees." We have made no attempt to determine their content, except to indicate that the first of them comprised the essentials of our present E. A. and F. C., and that the second contained the germs of our M.M. This question, in spite of its great intrinsic interest, does not come within the scope of our inquiry, except as it bears upon the question of origins and development. It is plainly obvious that the two things are really closely and organically connected, and that the limitation is an artificial one, but such restrictions have to be made in order to make investigation possible. There is just one observation to make before we pass on, the significance of which is greater than may at first appear. The three degree system which appears definitely in London in 1730, had in fifteen or twenty years spread all over the Masonic world so completely and so silently and with so little disturbance that for more than a hundred years thereafter no one ever so much as dreamed that any such radical change had taken place. Which fact, when all its bearings and implications are considered, is in itself proof that, frowns the inside, the change was nothing like so radical as it would appear.

Starting then with the traditional Operative two degrees, with their origin rooted in an indefinite past, we find that in 1730 there was certainly a third degree arrangement in being. We also have unequivocal proof that the old and the new methods overlapped - the old system existing in scattered survivals long afterwards; while conversely it can be confidently asserted that the three degrees must have existed before 1730; for aside from various allusions of earlier date, there is the general argument that such developments must always antedate their first publication in the nature of things. Hitherto it has been assumed, as we confess we had done previous to this investigation, that a higher limit had been set in 1723 by the Book of Constitutions, which refers definitely to the old system. But we have now to accept the full consequences of the fact that the circle of lodges that formed and adhered to the Grand Lodge in the first years of its existence did not comprise the whole Craft, and were probably, in point of numbers, an insignificant minority. Thus the field in which the evolution played its part is indefinitely extended; and it becomes possible, and even probable, in the light of social experience, that so far from the Grand Lodge being a hotbed of experiments and innovations it was a conservative factor from the beginning. More definitely, we might say that while in the field of legislation and regulation it had to innovate by the necessities of its existence, it balanced this by checking so far as was possible any changes in the traditional ritual. Thus, if we had to select any name as that of a probable "ritual tinker," it would be such a man as Dr. Stukeley, in his independent lodge at Grantham, rather than Payne, Desaguliers or Martin Clare. But this desire to ascribe epoch making changes to individuals is, while natural, liable to lead us into error. Such developments are always anonymous, they grow by imperceptible changes, here a little and there a little, and the whole passed on from group to group and generation to generation. It is understood that we are speaking of the genuine article and not the manufactured imitation.

Possible Development Outside Grand Lodge.

Now we have described the Grand Lodge as being under the spotlight, while the rest of the stage is in darkness; but this spotlight gives only a relative illumination unfortunately. Still we do have here a series of events that are more or less connected, whereas elsewhere we have only vague outlines in the obscurity. The Trinity College and Sloane MSS. are such disconnected facts, they may or they may not antedate 1717, they may or may not point to ritual evolution before that date. What we wish to insist upon is that exact dating is not possible, and further, that it fortunately is not very important whether the developments were earlier or later, for the really interesting and significant thing is the order in which they happened, and the operating conditions, causes and motives which brought them about. We shall therefore refrain from bringing together here all the scattered allusions that point to Masonic activity prior to 1717 or 1716, especially as most of them have already been mentioned, and point out some general considerations, which, though indirect, will help us to a realization of the extent of that darkened stage at the centre of which the Grand Lodge, in none too brilliant illumination, played its part.

The first of these is the extraordinary rapidity with which "regular" Masonry spread, not only in England, but in other countries. No one can contemplate this fact without having it borne in upon him that, even with American "quantity production" methods, it would have been impracticable to have made Masons enough in the lodges that are known to have existed to have founded the new lodges that were constituted under the London authority in the years succeeding 1717. The only answer is that there were already Masons, and probably lodges, who enlisted themselves in the new organization. And this not only in England, but in Europe also.

Now we are not now concerned with the propagation of Masonry or its origin in different countries, though, like the question of the content of the primitive ritual, it is a subject very intimately connected with our problem, and we have perforce to touch upon it. A suggestion has previously been made that there may have been a very practical, and even interested motive, for men of the higher classes of society entering a widespread fraternity in such troublous times as continued with brief intermissions, from the reign of Charles I to that of Queen Anne. As Hurree Chunder Mookerjee put it, when he was initiating Kim into the secrets ("quite unofficial") of his pet invention, the Sat Bhai, it might enable a man to "get his second wind" in an emergency. A Mason might find shelter and assistance when it was a matter of life and death. Let us remember in this connection that the percentage of Masons among soldiers, sailors, travellers, explorers and pioneers, has always been, and still is, very much higher than among other classes of men. And we have to remember also that, according to the custom of the time, it was of frequent occurrence for gentlemen to go abroad and serve as volunteers at their own expense in the continually recurring wars on the Continent. And besides this, the French kings had whole regiments, recruited entirely, officers and men, from Scotch and Irishmen, most of them political exiles. And so far as the Scots were concerned, the law of averages, as we have previously noted, makes it incredible that some Masons should not have been found among these migrants. What happened in the army besieging-Newcastle in 1641 might have been repeated - without record remaining any number of times elsewhere.

There are also some further facts to be considered. It was in France preeminently that the "high grades" later on had their rankest development; but Ireland was not far behind in the invention or adoption of new degrees and orders; and secret societies, it may be remarked, have always flourished among the Irish, as among the people of Sicily and China. Now if the Trinity College MS. suggests the possibility of ritual development in Ireland previous to 1717, we have to recall that already in 1745 there was in France a degree or order of Ecossais Masonry [213]. But this was not its beginning, for the first French Grand Lodge [214] added to Anderson's General Regulations, which it adopted in full, an additional one expressly denying the claims of Maitres Ecossais to dominate and supervise any lodge of which they were members, or even, as it would seem, merely visitors. Such a claim, which in spite of this new legislation was apparently often admitted by the lodges, must have had a history behind it. If Masonry was (as has been generally supposed) first introduced into France under the auspices of the Grand Lodge of London this phenomenon is quite inexplicable. But if we assume that there had been an earlier importation, by Scottish and Irish exiles (there were Maitres Irlandais as well as Maitres Ecossais) the later confusion and dissension could be explained as the inevitable conflict between the democratic ideas of "regular" Masonry and those of an autocratic development of the older and looser organization.

Very tentatively we would suggest that there is a possibility a possibility merely that not only before 1717, but earlier still, even perhaps in the seventeenth century, there existed in France, among the Stuart partisans in exile, the germ of what was later known as Macornerie Ecossaise. A germ only; bearing the same relation to the swarm of "Scottish," "Perfect" and "Elect" degrees that developed out of it that an egg does to the hatched chick. It is certain that the first definite appearance of what is now a heavily stressed feature (far too heavily stressed one might think) in the rituals of English speaking Masonry, both American and British, a feature that has never been incorporated into the Master's grade as worked in European countries, is first found in the Ecossais and Elu degrees [215]. We refer to the section concerning rewards and punishments. And we have also to remember the persistent tradition in early Continental Masonry of some relationship with Jacobite aims and pretensions. This has been denied many times as baseless, and baseless it may be for all we know definitely, yet so much smoke does seem to argue at least a little fire.

²¹³L'Ordre des Franc-Macons Trahi. In a note to the preface the Abbe Perau speaks of "un certain Orde qu'ils appellent les Ecossois, superieurs, a ce qu'on pretend, aux Francs-Macons ordinaires, & qui ont leurs Ceremonies & Leurs Secrets a part."

²¹⁴Lantoine, op. cit., p. 195.

²¹⁵Compare Mackey Encyclopedia under "Elu."

JACOBITE INTERPRETATION OF THE LEGEND.

There is a theory of the origin of the legend of the third degree which at one time had many upholders. This was that the legend was devised as a veiled and allegorical account of the "martyrdom" of Charles I. We certainly hope that no one will suspect us of wishing to revive this, but it must be pointed out, that just as the Masonic myth could be interpreted in the Order of Rose Croix as an allegory of the death of Christ, the Word Incarnate, so it could also have been interpreted as referring to the king slain by traitors, as loyalists naturally regarded them. Psychologically we can easily appreciate that it would be very natural for dispossessed men, followers of a king in exile, whether Charles or James, or both in turn, to so interpret such a legend, and further that to them would it be most likely to occur that the story was deficient in the particular point which would be uppermost in their minds justice and vengeance.

Having said this, let us enter a caveat. We ask no one to accept any of these suggestions, nor have we adopted them ourselves except so far as to recognize their being possibilities, perhaps only barely such, but still possibilities. None of all this is really essential to our further argument, we have canvassed the subject only to draw attention to that wider background upon which the evolution of the primitive degrees took place within the circle of Grand Lodge Masonry. The background we do assert was there, and it was neither inert nor inactive. To such as would deprecate such hypothetical reconstructions as useless, we would say that the facts known to us do not lead to positive conclusions, and that like indeterminate equations in algebra the only thing to do is to work out all possible solutions to the problem. Such hypotheses have this use, that they may lead to the discovery of further facts that either support or negative them, and so help us to more solidly founded results.

Should anyone feel shocked at the suggestion that new degrees might have been in existence prior to 1717 it might be said that there is distinct evidence that one important modification had taken place in the legend long before the death of Charles Stuart. We refer to the curious fact that the earliest printed English translations of the Bible, those of Tyndale and Matthews, transliterated the name and title of the architect of the Temple as Hiram Abi, whereas the earlier manuscript versions, like the later printed ones, all followed the Vulgate in rendering the second word as "his father," or some equivalent phrase. When we remember that these two translations were condemned, and so thoroughly sought out and destroyed by the authorities that they are now exceedingly rare, it becomes to a very high degree probable that it was during the twenty years or so of their currency, roughly between 1530 and 1550, that this peculiar phrase was adopted into Masonry.

Two things only do we carry over from this discussion. One practically certain, the other possible. The first is that extraneous material was at some time incorporated into the legend of the Master from so-called Ecossais Masonry, which definitely fits in with the view that the evolutionary process within the Grand Lodge circle was affected by what we have called the background. The other is, that evolution may not have been unilateral, but may have proceeded along different lines in different places, and also that it may have begun earlier than has hitherto been supposed. And here there is one thing that may be referred to again because it is like a fixed point in a fog. It has no known antecedents, or consequents, that we know of. This is Stukeley's "Order of the Book"; mentioned once in

his diary, and then silence. It is brought up simply because it shows that the possibility of creating new orders and degrees was in the air, even if the possibility that there had been any development in France or Ireland be summarily rejected.

PART 18

WE will now return to more solid ground the Book of Constitutions. Here we find that the Duke of Wharton when Grand Master used a new ceremonial devised for the formal inauguration of new lodges and the installation of their officers. The latter forms the basis of our present Installation Ceremonial. Now it is almost (though not quite) definitely said by Anderson that there were secrets connected with this formulary, that parts of it could not be printed. Whether any such part was peculiar to Installed Masters only does not appear [216]. Certainly later on the most important sections of the Installation Ceremonies became, in all essentials, a degree, as we have already noted. Out of it, or rather an archaic variant of it, came the Past Master's Degree of the American Capitular Rite. And a certain significant part of this ritual, one which bears all the marks of antiquity, points to the ceremony having been originally conceived as a third and culminating degree, just as a number of the high grades show similar marks of being composed as a fourth, that is, as following our third, or Master Mason's, degree. We cannot be more explicit.

And the Candidate [Master-elect] signifying his cordial submission thereto [i. e., the Charges of a Master], the Grand Master shall, by certain significant Ceremonies and ancient Usages install him, and present him with the constitutions, the Lodge Book, and the Instruments of his Office, not all together, but one after another; and after each of them the Grand Master, or his Deputy, shall rehearse the short and pithy Charge that is suitable to the thing presented.

There is no indication here of anything not open to the members of the lodge. It is only the fact that, at some later time, the Installation did develop into a degree (in our sense of the word) that leads us to see any Special Significance in the passage.

Now here we can begin to put things together. Back in the fog is the possibility of evolution of new ritual forms on the Continent, with echoes in Britain. Then we have the very definite Installation, that certainly later on became a degree (in our sense of the term) at the very time that the balance of the evidence points to the old two-grade system still holding the ground in the Grand Lodge circle. The possible inference is, that in England the earliest "three degree" system was Apprentice, Master or Fellow, and Master of the Lodge. And as a matter of fact the last of these has continuously remained at the apex of the ritual Sequence worked in the lodge, in spite of the legal fiction that it is not a degree.

²¹⁶The passage referred to is at page 72 of the first edition and for convenience we cite the particular sentences which imply Something of an esoteric nature.

Installation And Past Master.

This inference is not particularly welcome, for it seems to complicate further an already too complicated affair. However, there it is and nothing is gained by ignoring it. Let us then proceed with the facts. This Installation business was apparently devised, or at least first used, in 1722. Between 1723 and 1730 another degree was slipped in. The Past Master's degree contains certain features that seem once to have been part of the ancient tradition of Masonry; again we cannot be explicit and must leave it to Past Masters to search and interpret for themselves. So also this later, inserted, grade contained nothing essentially new, for it was probably at first no more than a cutting in two of the Apprentice part. We may say then that the situation in 1728, or thereabouts, was roughly this. In some lodges, yet untouched by the novelties, there were two ceremonies employed, in others only one, combining the two, either in immediate sequence or "telescoped" together. [217] While those lodges which were in the forefront of the new movement had three or four. Yet the Fellow of either kind of the older lodges had received everything that was communicated to the Installed Master of the last group, except perhaps some things that were absolutely new inventions devised to round out a ritual. This would account for the fact that the new system made its way under ground, as it were, and with no apparent disturbance; and anything that can account for so remarkable a phenomenon is indeed welcome, and by that fact alone commends itself as credible. To make the transition still easier, the first and second degrees of the new System were for many years (so it appears) invariably given together. Thus it was in effect little more than a change of nomenclature, the Apprentice of one lodge was equal to the Fellow Craft of another. The Fellow or Master of the first was the same as the Master Mason of the Second. As there were never any Entered Apprentices of the latter lodges (seeing they were all "passed" as Fellow Crafts on the same occasion as being "made" Apprentices) there could be no confusion in visiting and communicating.

But having suggested a "how" for the process we now have to seek a "why." Which is a harder (and more elusive) nut to crack. First we must assume that there was a keen interest in the ritual, on the part of some Masons at least; and the first step of these interested brethren would be (what it always has been since) the collecting and comparing variations. And as everything was fluid, and there were no authoritative standards, there would be probably a good deal of compilation; improving one tradition by the addition of bits from others. The old Catechisms, as we have noted, contain evidences of such a process antedating our period by an unknown number of years. The next step would be

²¹⁷The "telescoped" ritual could very easily have grown up. In an operative lodge the non-operative entrant was an honorary member. For him the rules were naturally relaxed. The Apprenticeship was omitted; the forms might or might not be gone through, but in any case he came at once to membership and fellowship. Now gradually the number of honorary members increases, till finally the operative membership is extinct. During this change a tradition has grown up of some form of combination of the two ceremonies. After a while, the more curious and interested brethren begin to consider the symbolism or the ritual, and they come to feel that to omit apprenticeship has led to a loss of significance. They perhaps find out that in some lodges (possibly still in part operative) there are two distinct ceremonies, and they begin to urge a return to the old ways, as they understand them. But the old ways have suffered a "sea change." The apprenticeship as restored is purely Symbolical, and while the brethren of Haughfoot postulated the interval of a year, Dunblane was satisfied (as most lodges since) with simply a second meeting.

rationalization. To some extent this would be a necessary consequence of the compilation work, the pieces of the mosaic would have to be made to fit. But the open field for such enterprise would be the Legend. According to the probabilities indicated by the scanty scraps of evidence, this reached our ritualists in a form very like a folktale; the master was dead - the master was alive; the word was lost - the word was found. As a ritual myth this fairy-story inconsequence was of no moment - it had the logic of its species; that is, it closely conformed to the ceremony of which it was the verbal counterpart and accompaniment. But our brethren of the "Age of Reason" knew nothing of ritual myths; they took the story literally at its face value. It was for them a history that had become corrupted by transmission through dark ages of ignorance and superstition; and they supposed, quite confidently, that to apply the standards of reason to it, and to prune out the inconsistencies, would restore it to its original form. But even so they were cautious and conservative, and though a good deal was added bit by bit as time went on, the actual changes made in the original deposit were always the least possible. A dead man could not come to life, but his body might be exhumed and reburied; being dead he could not transmit the word and so it was lost, and a substitute had to be provided, and so on.

But this elaboration apparently led to a situation where he dramatis personae of the tale came to be represented by the officers of the lodge; and in the newer version of the story two of these also had the word but were debarred by a technicality from communicating it. It might then come about, in that spirit of serious make-believe which as had so much to do with the development of Masonic ritual, that the word communicated to the Master at his installation was taken to be the real word that had been lost. It would have a semblance of fitness it was a word that he could not communicate either to the candidate or to the Fellows (i.e., Masters) of the lodge. Perhaps the better way to express it would be to say that it was taken to represent the word supposed to be lost. Outside of the make-believe they probably knew then, as Masons take for granted now, that the substitute word is in fact and in truth the real master's word, whatever symbolism may be attached to the idea of substitution.

THE PAST MASTER AND THE ROYAL ARCH

This of course is pure hypothesis, a speculation about what might have happened. And if it did happen, it could ever have occupied the whole field or been more than a rapidly passing phase. But it affords a framework on which several fragments of fact may be hung in what seems to be an ordered relation with the whole, and which otherwise are hard to place. For instance, there is the remarkably close and intimate connection of the Installed or Past Master with the Royal Arch. And incidentally, it appears that the original Royal Arch, by a subdivision like that hypothetically suggested for the original first degree, gave birth later on to the different "excellent" masterships, and the Orders of Red Cross and Knight Templar. But there is a still closer and more significant connection between the Past Master and the Royal Arch. It is very possible that the tri-syllabic phrase which is the culminating secret of the latter grade is derived directly from that word which was taken out of the "points" of the original Fellow and made the significant word of the Installed Master. We can hardly say much about it here, at if those who have received both words will look in the right places, a series of intermediate forms may be found at lead from one to the other by easy and natural stages.

But while evolution was working upwards it was operative also in the other direction. Possibly even sooner. It would be felt almost at once that this system was ill-balanced, and unsatisfying. The climax, instead of coming at the third stage (as by all symbolical analogy it should), came second, while the third grade in comparison was an empty husk. This would give a strong impulsion to follow any line by which the balance could be adjusted and bring the climax into its fitting place. The expedient of a division of the first grade would accomplish this with the least possible disturbance. But how would the idea of division arise?

Source Of The Idea Of Division.

There were several things that might have suggested it. There was (on the basis of our previous conclusions) a precedent in the separation of the amalgamated two degrees in those places where such amalgamation or telescoping had existed. The investigations of our hypothetical zealous ritualists would very soon discover this corruption and seek to remedy it. The Haughfoot and Dunblane resolutions forbidding entering and passing at the same sederunt, may be taken as the results of such attempts at reform. (1)

But the discovery that a single ceremony had been really the decadent amalgamation of two distinct rites, would create a receptive state of mind for any suggestion that there had been further telescoping. Here a possible, and even probable, misunderstanding of the relationship of Masters and Fellows, as well as of "Master Masons" and "Fellow Crafts" would come in. To the brethren of this period, largely or entirely divorced from all operative connection, and in any case living at a time when, in all trades and crafts, the masters or employers and their journeymen had come to be quite distinct classes, the original equivalence of "Fellows" and "Masters" would be obscured. It would appear, from their reading of the Old Charges, that there were properly three grades. They had separated one into two, but to complete the reform required a further division.

A line of demarcation would be at once apparent. There were two words held sacred in the Apprentice grade, as there had been two in the Fellow's also. One of the latter had been taken into the new Installed Master (or alternatively, was eventually to be so transferred the sequence does not affect the argument vitally) and so these two Apprentice words would each form the nucleus of the ritual of a degree. And, as we have seen, the first form of the division was actually more nominal than real. In 1745 in France we find the candidate still being made a Fellow at once, under the designation of Apprentice-Fellow (Apprentif-Compagnon); and that literally described the process. The ceremony and the secrets were the same as for the old Apprentice. The novelty was all in the added name. The candidate was told that the first word belonged to Apprentices, the second to Fellow Crafts, and that he was an Apprentice-Fellow Craft. But naturally the first part of the appellation was dropped in time, and more differentiation grew up in the re-duplicated ritual until by a series of additions, constructed by analogy, the Fellow Craft Part became a full degree. Though even after this had come about the two were still customarily given at the same time, with no longer interval between them than was required for a withdrawal from the lodge by the candidate to allow its being opened in the higher grade. But eventually, the same feeling that had caused earlier separation between Apprentice and Master would lead to a real interval being demanded by the two separated, and now autonomous parts of the Apprentice ceremony.

SIMPLE EXPLANATION INADEQUATE.

We grant willingly that this reconstruction is speculative in the highest degree, but in formulating it we have endeavoured to arrange all the scattered and fragmentary facts in such a way as to link them all together. We are also perfectly ready to believe that other causes and motives may have been at work, and influenced the final result. Indeed we are inclined to put it more strongly, and say that for such a complex result there must have been other causes involved. No theory that supposed deliberate and conscious invention can, in our opinion, ever be accepted as adequate. The history of such an institution as the Masonic Fraternity is a process, analogous to that of a living organism, and it is impossible in the nature of things that any simple, clear-cut theory should cover the whole ground.

The time has now come to make some brief recapitulation of the results of our discussion. This falls into two parts. The first is the attempt to discover the actual structure of the Craft in regard to grades or degrees at the critical point of the transition, that is, the year 1717, or better, the period between 1717 and 1730; the second is the more risky enterprise of reconstructing the process by which the traditional structure developed into the system now existing.

In regard to the first of these correlated efforts the really fundamental evidence upon which we have to adjudicate is that of the remaining minutes and records of the old lodges whose existence antedated the critical period of change. We venture to think that we have conclusively demonstrated from these records that two degrees, in the sense in which we have defined the term, were in existence everywhere that definite evidence of this kind is found; providing, that is, that it first be admitted that there was something of an esoteric nature initiatory ceremonies and secret means of recognition.

This conclusion is reinforced both by the dubious evidence of the Old Catechisms on the one hand, and that of the respectable but obscure MS. Constitutions on the other. These last, so interpreted, carry the two degree system back several centuries, and thus lead to the inference that this system was not only ancient, but general.

A Medieval Evolution Possible

It does not of course follow that there were always two degrees in the distant past. While it is purely a matter of speculation in the utter lack of evidence, it is possible that the twodegree system was the result of an early Medieval evolution. Originally there might have been one initiation ceremony, coming at the end of the stage of pupillage, when the Apprentice became a free craftsman and his own master, in the limited sense that any man was his own master in those days. Medieval society tended strongly to restrictions, quantity production was undreamed of, and not only undesired, but would have been vigorously suppressed had it been attempted. The effort was made, both consciously and unconsciously, to prevent over production of anything, goods or workmen. This economic and social tendency tended toward the extension of the time of training by the addition of a period during which the young workman was neither properly an apprentice nor yet fully free of his Craft. The extra period of seven years prescribed by the Shaw Statutes before the Entered Apprentice could become a Fellow of Craft might be taken to indicate something of this sort, and it might be plausible to assume that in thus increasing the transition stage between the status of pupil and that of master, the initiation that marked it traditionally was cut in two, and part given at the beginning and part at the end of the period. But this is really outside the limits of our subject even were it anything more than mere speculation. The point that we regard as established is that modern Freemasonry inherited two degrees from the Medieval institution.

Subsidiary inferences from the same evidence point to modifications due to changing social and economic conditions. The restrictions of the older order were breaking down. Competent workmen came into existence who did not belong to the old organization. In compensation, many entered it who were not craftsmen at all, except in an honorary sense, in germ a symbolic sense too, it may be, and this led very naturally to a breakdown of the distinctions between the two grades, first by the elimination of the interval between them and possibly in places, by a further stage of decay, to an amalgamation of the two ceremonies into one. But, as there was no central controlling mechanism there was no uniformity, and all stages existed simultaneously in different places. This secondary conclusion we regard as practically established, but not quite so definitely or certainly as the primary one that the two-degree system was the traditional inheritance of the Craft.

In reconstructing the stages of the evolution from a two to a three-degree arrangement we start from quite solid ground. By applying the general results of modern anthropological researches to the content of the degrees - which of course has been no more than baldly stated - for obvious reasons - we are led to the conclusion that the present third degree is as archaic and primitive in its constituent elements as the first, while a comparison of rituals reveals that the second is merely an echo or duplication of the first, or more correctly, was no more than this in its inception, while the special characteristics it now possesses bear the obvious marks of the century in which they were invented. From this, it seems to a very high degree probable that the original two grades became three by the division of the first one into two parts.

The obvious practical difficulties presented by this deduction from the contents of the degrees are apparent only, as we have shown. The fact that the new first and second degrees were always given at the same time until long after the third degree system had

become general obviated the confusion that would otherwise have been created. But the psychological difficulties are another matter. To answer the question "Why " is always harder than to show "how."

Our suggested answer is no more than a guess controlled by the facts. Up to this point we believe the conclusions reached are the most probable interpretations of the existing evidence. From here on we enter the realm of hypothesis, and for this reason have done no more than barely sketch our tentative explanation.

One new point was developed, which is that we do not have, as has been generally supposed since Gould wrote, any higher limiting date for the beginning of the evolution, for Anderson's Book of Constitutions only shows that the Grand Lodge began with two degrees, and does not prove that no incipient third degree could have existed outside that organization. While very little can be built on a mere possibility, it does negate any argument founded on a presumed impossibility, which may be very important sometimes.

THE NATURE OF SOCIAL EVOLUTION.

In the evolution of a social organism, as in a physical one, every part has some effect upon the whole. Some more, and some less, naturally. Outstanding leaders, whether known to history or not, have left their mark more deeply than the rank and file that is inevitable. Payne and Anderson, Dermott and Preston, Webb, Mackey and Pike, to mention a few whose names are known to most Masons, undoubtedly had much to do with modifying the Masonic system. But only as the body was prepared to assimilate their ideas only as they took the lead along the general line of evolution along which the Craft as a whole was moving. So that on the whole we can say that even the greatest Masonic leaders and teachers have had less effect, much less effect really, than they seem to have had. And in view of all this we believe there is still plenty of room for other students to re-examine the facts and bring out fresh combinations, and further motives and movements that played their part in the final result, which we have so far missed.

We suggest that, in the nature of things, it is very probable that there should have been abortive beginnings parallel to the one that finally held the field. Just as a number of seeds sprouting together aid each other in pushing out of the ground, while later one or two will crowd cut the rest, which finally die of inanition, or are thinned out by the gardener, so every development in a social organism is preceded or accompanied by similar or parallel movements looking to the same end.

In the first place it is not only probable, but almost inevitable, that some Masons of a curious turn of mind, and especially those of antiquarian tastes, should have speculated about the origin of the mysterious institution of which they had become members. The bylaws of the old Lodge of York [218] provided for an hour "to talk about Masonry." Compilation of variants, and suggested explanations that had met with approval, would gradually well the ceremonies. The cold hand of logic could seize hold of the impossibilities in the ritual Myth of the Master. The word, once said to have been found, would be explained is a substitute; and this would open up a prolific field of speculation as to what the real word was, and whence it came and what it meant. And this again would fit in with speculations as to the origin of the Fraternity and its real purpose. The skit attributed to Dean Swift [219] proves that even in 1724, thirteen years earlier than Ramsay's famous oration, the hypothesis of an origin in the Crusades and some connection with the chivalric orders of soldier monks, was sufficiently widespread to be almost public property, and then there are the vague rumors of some entanglement with the hopes and plans of the partizans of the Stuarts. All these things show at least an active interest in the origin and meaning of the institution, which would form a fertile seed bed for definite formulations in ritual guise, once the idea of new grades or degrees was presented. Stukeley's "Order of the Book" may have been such an attempt at explanation and interpretation in ritual form for all we know; though equally it may have had nothing to do with Masonry at all.

²¹⁸Gould. Hist. vol. iii, p. 159, Rule 13. Mackey was rather scornful of this rule, but in how many lodges in his day (there is little need to ask how many now) was any time set aside regularly to "talk Masonry?" See Mackey, Hist., vol. iv, page 1134, note 3.

²¹⁹Chetwode Crawley in Sadler's Masonic Reprints add Historical Revelations (1898), page 375 of the reproduction. Also Lepper and Crossle, History on the Grand Lodge of Ireland, page 457.

But two organized interpretations did emerge eventually and have persisted and flourished till now, the Royal Arch and Ecossaism, the so-called Scottish degrees. The connection between the secrets of the Installed Master and the Royal Arch could only be explained in a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons in America, or in private in England to Royal Arch Masons who were also Installed Masters, so all that can be said here is that in our judgment it is a very close and intimate one, and that the one developed out of the other. But the Installation of the Master of a Lodge came into existence earlier than any other development is known to have done. This presents the possibility that within the Grand Lodge organization it may have given the idea and the impetus which led to the division of the first degree into two to make a tri-gradual system. Though it remains possible that the idea, and the first essays along this line, came from outside that circle, and leaked into it against the will of its directing spirits.

If it be objected that this is all very hazy and unsatisfactory we can only say that tentative and hypothetical answers are all that the evidence will yield. We cannot get a clear-cut answer out of the disjointed and fragmentary facts. Any such answer stands self- convicted of going beyond the evidence.

Finally we would point out that these suggestions are not necessarily inconsistent with such other hypotheses as have been offered. That of Bro. Vibert, for instance, is quite compatible with them - it is only offering a double motive for what was done. Even Gould's theory of misunderstanding can be fitted in, if it be somewhat enlarged, and not confined to a misunderstanding of the phraseology of the Book of Constitutions merely. Doubtless there are other possible motives and reasons and causes that could be discovered and shown to be complementary. We hope others may follow along and pick them out of relations and connections in the evidence that we have failed to observe.

Coming now to the "very end," as signallers put it, we shall be very grateful for any suggestions, criticisms or corrections. We are hoping to republish these articles in book form, and would like to make them as useful and reliable as possible, in the hope that others may build on the foundations we using the work of our predecessors have laid. The task has been much greater than was anticipated when it was begun, and we confess that it is not without relief that we now bring it to a close.

- END -